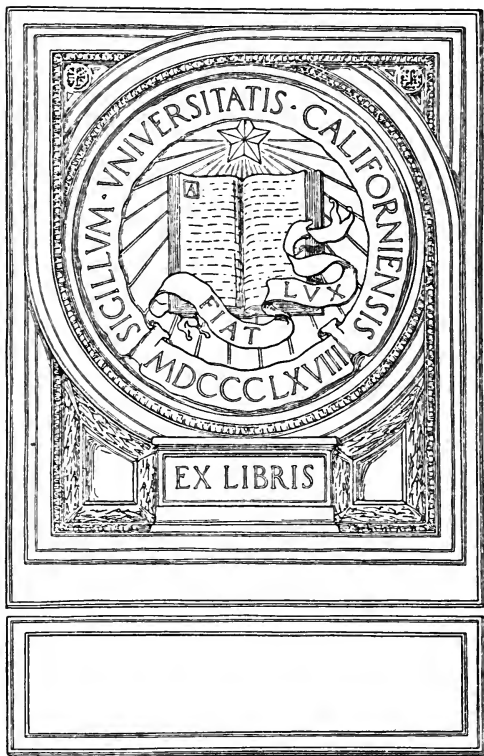


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**THE SPIRIT OF MODERN  
GERMAN LITERATURE**

*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*  
**THE MODERN DRAMA**  
AN ESSAY IN INTERPRETATION



# THE SPIRIT OF MODERN GERMAN LITERATURE

*LECTURES DELIVERED BEFORE  
THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN*

BY

LUDWIG LEWISOHN, A.M., LITT.D.

Professor in The Ohio State University



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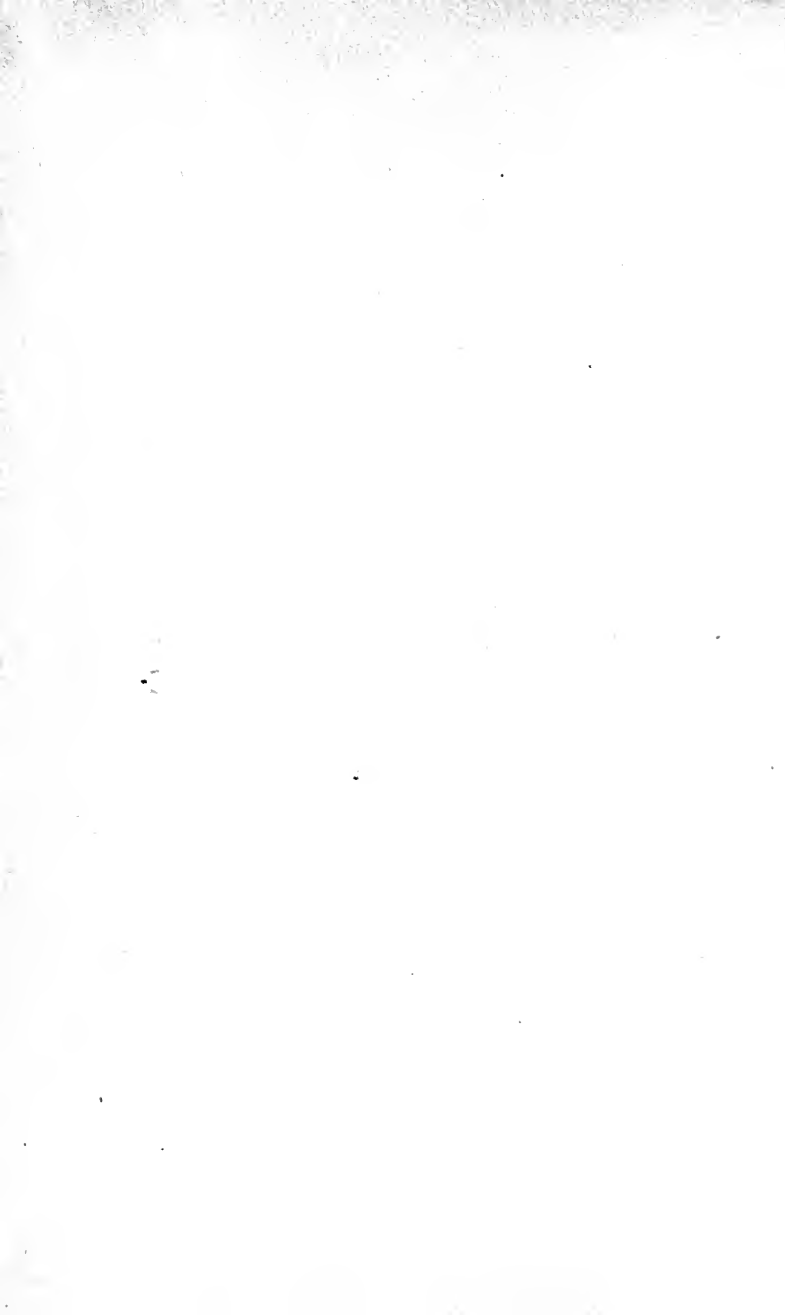
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## PREFACE

THIS small volume is not polemical in spirit or intention. When, however, through the kindness of my friend Professor A. R. Hohlfeld, the University of Wisconsin invited me to lecture on some phase of modern German literature, an appropriate opportunity seemed provided for recalling to the calmer and more reflective among us the true character of the clearest self-expression of modern Germany.

If my praise of certain German novels and plays and poems seem excessive, let me remind my critics to ask themselves whether they have read these novels and plays and poems with a full and exact mastery of the German tongue. Let me beg them, at all events, not to ascribe my estimates to the enthusiasm of the narrow specialist. I am not that. Period by period, I know English literature rather better than German, and French

## PREFACE

reasonably well. Nor have I myself much respect for any criticism that is not intelligently aware of at least two literatures besides the one under discussion.

That the scholar may not ask for some substantiation of my statements in vain, I have added a commentary; but I have relegated it to the back of the volume in order to spare the general reader.

LUDWIG LEWISOHN.

The Ohio State University,  
August, 1916.

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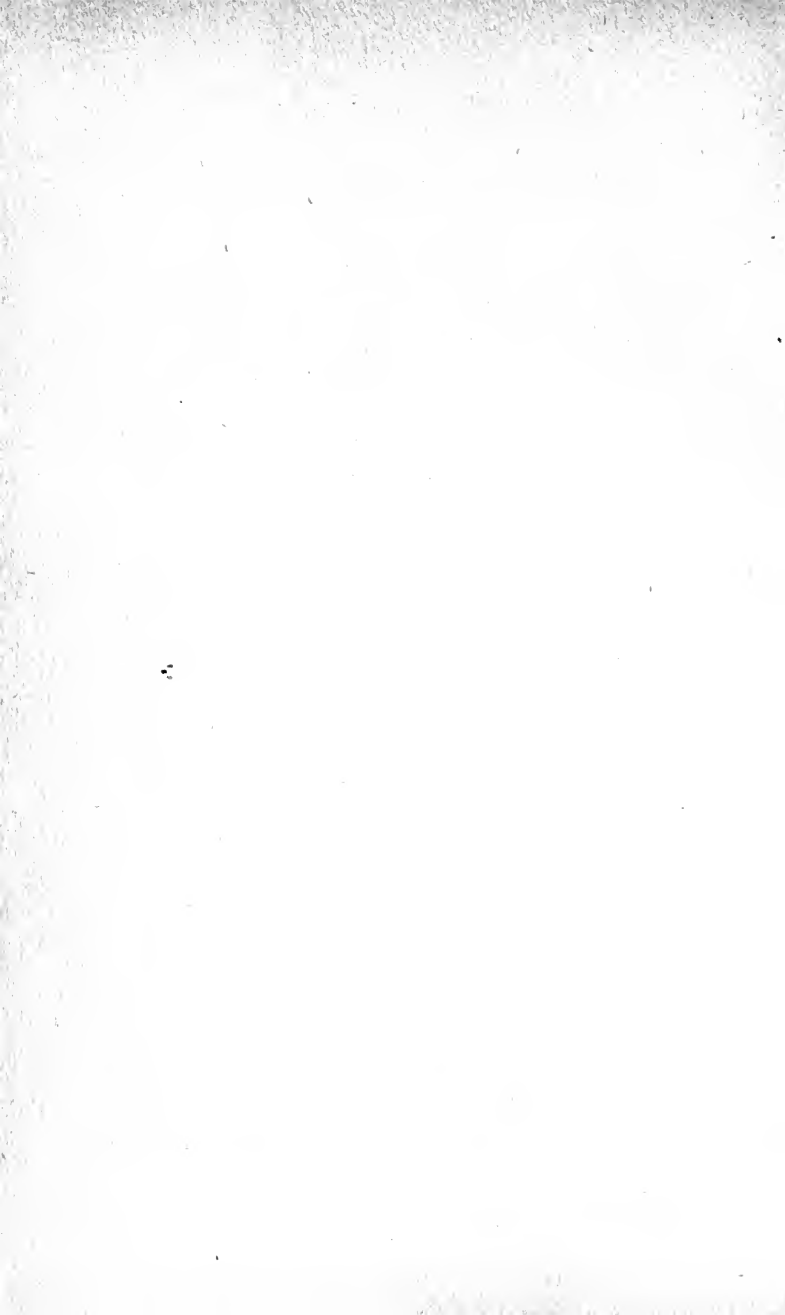
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**PART I**  
**THE SEARCH FOR REALITY**



# THE SPIRIT OF MODERN GERMAN LITERATURE

## I

### THE NATION AND ITS LITERATURE

THE art of criticism, if it is to have dignity and permanent value, must largely abandon both the expression of mere opinion and the habit of judging. In its more elementary sense the judging of books has happily grown to be almost unnecessary. No books that are quite worthless are apt to rise into the field of serious discussion. Some energy of thought, some beauty of phrasing, will be found to belong to every work, in any language that, in our age, employs the critical intelligence. As a spectacle the literary annihilation of Georges Ohnet by the late Jules Lemaître was both wholesome and edifying. But one wonders whether the blows of that keen and supple blade were not

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wasted. I am very sure, at least, that an American critic, executing public justice on Mr. Harold Bell Wright or Mrs. Gene Stratton Porter would not rob those respectable persons of a single reader. No, the grim, old-fashioned judging of books need be to us neither a temptation nor a danger. Our criticism is far more subtly menaced: by the opinions of second-rate minds delivered with an air of moral authority; by the substitution of tribal formularies for a living sense of the nature of all the arts.

These, and especially the art of literature, grow out of an impassioned experience of life. To every poet, to every "maker" in the wider sense, a god, in the fine words of Goethe, has given the power to express what he has suffered. The method of expression is necessarily, at least in its most obvious aspects, traditional. Here certain standards may be applied. The soul of the work, however, like that soul from whose experience it grew, is unique. It is a new thing born into this immemorial world. If it were not, if it could be judged by critical formulæ derived from the books

of old—these would suffice us. Is it not clear then, that what the critic needs for his task is, above all, a deep sense of the nature of life and a sensitive perception of living beauty? How rarely, among us, does he possess these qualifications!— In the most scholarly of our weeklies a critic has recently been reviewing a number of modern plays. He does not like the people in these plays, and the problems discussed fill him with moral discomfort. But he, poor man, mistakes the dislikes and revulsions bred in him by the temper of his spiritual parish for the laws of a changeless order, and rashly proceeds to lecture such profound and subtle masters as Jules Lemaitre and Arthur Schnitzler upon the unveracity and perversity of their report of the life of man. Such a critic, evidently, needs humility—a humility and wisdom that will not come to him through another course in the history of literature, but through a course in hunger, love and grief. To know life, then, directly and not through the mist of tribal taboos, to be sensitive to beauty and aware of its power to assume forms ever new and

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strange—these are the precious parts of a critic's equipment. Nor will a critic so equipped fail of his reward. For books approved in his spirit will have the best chance of being memorable, since they will have sprung, whatever their imperfections, from the perennial source of all true art—the struggling, agonizing human soul.

And so my excuse for venturing to give you an account and an interpretation of certain modern German books must be not that I have read them and assorted them with a doctoral acquiescence in the rules of a preceptist criticism. It must be and it is that these books—like certain other books written in England and France and America—have been a living experience of my mind and heart. I have responded, as at a command, to the heroic manhood of Liliencron, I have shared Dehmel's struggle of liberation from the lusts of life, I have identified myself with Thomas Mann's brooding curiosity of our mortal lot, I have walked with Stefan George in the gardens of a timeless and ineffable beauty.

Yet I would not have you think my account of

the spirit of modern German literature at all desultory, or my choice of books by which to interpret it merely arbitrary. I have read a great many poems and plays and novels written in German between 1885 and 1914. They varied, of course, immensely in value and in character. Gradually, however, I seemed to hear a recurrent note—a deep tone; or, rather, a series of tones, like a theme in music. This theme admitted of infinite variations in an infinite variety of artistic moods and rhythms. But it recurred and gathered breadth and force and clearness and assimilated other themes into its dominant melody. And from certain books it seemed to sound forth, in its two chief phases, most fully and most greatly. These are the books of which I have chosen to speak. And when, finally, I turned to the critical literature of my subject, which I had faithfully striven to forget, I found myself in substantial agreement with the most sensitive and learned minds in attributing to the books of my choice præminent significance and representative power.

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I have dwelt largely, especially in my second lecture, on the lyric which, in our own day, interprets so closely the temper of the poet and his contemporaries. We are so keenly aware of ourselves, so watchful of the complexities of our inner lives, and we have learned to express our thoughts and moods with a new exactness and a new fineness of shading. Here, too, the artist speaks directly and thus most clearly. The novelist and the playwright may attribute to their characters thoughts and feelings that are no true utterances of the psychical contents of the age. The speech of the lyricist cannot be questioned. For this importance of the lyric I am glad to be able to adduce so noble an authority as that of Karl Lamprecht. "More than any other poetic kind," he writes, "lyrical poetry has either first or, at least, first effectively introduced nearly all changes in the recent history of creative literature."

My account, then, will be of what is finest and of much that is most poetical in the modern literature of the German tongue; those elements



in that literature which voice most clearly the spiritual temper of our German contemporaries. This will seem strange to you. For, judging from your experience within our own civilization, you will conclude at once that these books are the possession of small circles in the great German centers of culture and of solitary lovers of the art of letters here and there. It happens to be true, on the contrary, that no nation, in any age, has accorded the masterpieces of its contemporary prose and verse so wide and eager a welcome as the modern Germans have accorded their own. At the risk of boring you with dull figures I must substantiate this sweeping statement. The best modern anthology of German lyric verse, a choice of poems almost perversely rigid in its standards, attained a sale of one hundred and twenty-five thousand copies in eight years, a second volume by the same editor a sale of forty-five thousand copies in three. Hans Benzmann's excellent selection from the contemporary lyric has passed through seventy-five large editions in

- nine years; a selection of the one hundred best

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poems of Richard Dehmel through twenty editions in five years. The volumes of poets as difficult and subtle as Rilke and George have reached from five to six editions and are never out of print, the poetical dramas of Hofmannsthal have passed through ten, twenty, and even thirty editions. The novel circulates widely in every country. What gives the sale of certain German novels its importance is their spiritual weightiness and artistic distinction. Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* has long passed its fiftieth edition, Clara Viebig's *Our Daily Bread* its twenty-second and her *Watch on the Rhine* its twenty-eighth. Gustav Frenssen's *Jörn Uhl* has exceeded a sale of two hundred and thirty thousand and his *Holy Land (Hilligenlei)* of one hundred and forty thousand copies. A book so lyrical and delicate as Hermann Hesse's *Peter Camenzind* has sold more than fifty editions, and even Ricarda Huch's severe *Ludolf Ursleu* has been reprinted more than ten times. I must not extend this list inordinately. It suffices to add that the plays of Arthur Schnitzler in the original single volume editions

have reached a sale of over four hundred thousand copies and those of Gerhart Hauptmann of far more than one million. I abstain from mentioning the enormous circulations of reprints of native and foreign classics or of scientific, historical and philosophical works. For I merely desired to show you that the dissemination of the finest contemporary literature in Germany is probably without parallel.

This dissemination of fine art is not an accident. It is, on the part of the modern Germans, in Eucken's weighty words, due to the "craving for a stronger, deeper life." He proceeds: "Fashion may have much to do with this widespread interest in art, and the average society person certainly looks to art rather for enjoyment than for inner culture. Yet we may very pertinently ask what it is that gives this fashion its power and why men court beauty so eagerly? And the answer can only be that we are possessed by a longing for more soul in life, more inward joy and that it is as an antidote to the level monotony of our ordinary environment that we seek

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to introduce into it the quickening and ennobling influences of art." Let me quote, in addition, from Hugo von Hofmannsthal's incomparably pregnant and beautiful discourse: *The Poet and Our Age*. "I almost regard as the characteristic gesture of our time man with a book in his hand, even as the kneeling man with folded hands was the gesture of another age." And everywhere, among his contemporaries the Austrian poet sees "a hidden reckoning with the poet, a hidden yearning for him, a hidden seeking of refuge in his power." He sees this even in the readers of scientific books and manuals. For "what their yearning seeks is the connective emotions, the cosmic emotions, the intellectual feelings, just those which a true and austere science must always deny itself, just those which the poet alone can give. . . . They seek the poet and they name him not."

If the student of literature desired some further evidence of the modern German's quest for beauty, he would but need to turn to the other arts. And not alone to music and painting and

sculpture with its interesting experiments in wood and ceramic media, but even to the humbler crafts and decorative arts. He will find there an admirable effort to render comely the plainest utensils of daily life: lovely glasses and vases and cups, chairs and beds and couches of delicate and strong design. And he will meet in his daily studies, among his least expensive volumes, charming examples of the modern German craft of bookmaking: ample and fair pages, fonts of type that are in harmony with the matter, cover designs occasionally elaborate but oftener of a beautifully balanced simplicity. In modern Germany, in a word, the finest fruits of civilization are

"In widest commonalty spread,"

because common men have learned to desire and to prize them.

## II

### THE NOVEL OF DOCTRINAL NATURALISM

THE first effort of the modern movement in German literature was an effort to understand life: to master reality by grappling with it on its own relentless terms. The generation that reached maturity in the years that followed the founding of the empire confronted a world in which a pallid idealism seemed very vain and futile. Great national tasks were to be performed, economic and social justice was to be established, the results of the empirical sciences were to be assimilated by the minds of men. What was to be accomplished could not be determined without a deep and detailed knowledge of that reality which all desired so eagerly to transform. And thus the men of 1885, in the service of every duty and ideal which they embraced, demanded that art

represent life, the life about them, with stringent and austere exactness.

Their fervor was the fervor of idealists and reformers. It is a very shallow criticism that attributes to the consistent naturalists a morbid love of ugliness and disease. Much as Zola taught them, they were no children of his spirit. They were not determined, like that great romanticist gone astray, that man should be a brute at any cost. Their acute and detailed observation was born of their deep compassion, of their desire that man should become less of a brute. They were all convinced meliorists in those early years and their cruelest pictures of life cried out, by that very cruelty of delineation, for the righting of some unendurable wrong. In brief, the first phase of naturalism was a militant phase. It was really doctrinal and polemic and its superb creation of the illusion of reality was often discounted by some flagrant ethical intention. So Hauptmann plead in *Before Dawn* for temperance, and in *The Reconciliation* for moral health, Sudermann in *Honor* and Schnitzler in *Fair Game* (*Freiwild*)

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for homelier and juster views of personal honor, and Hartleben in *The Education for Marriage* for a more wholesome adjustment of the life of sex. The far-reaching success of such a novel as Gabriele Reuter's *Of Good Family* (1895) was due less to its sound and close description of certain conditions than to the passionate cry of accusation that rang from its pages.

So, too, it was their doctrinal character that robbed some, at least, of the early naturalistic plays and novels of a more lasting value. Life, in them, was seen with marvelous exactness of detail. But the details were often selected and arranged according to some antecedent theory of social justice or scientific fact. Industrial movements and natural forces were more apt, especially in the novel, to be the protagonists than men and women. As a protest against a shallow idealism the movement was admirable. But it, too, at times, raised probabilities into certainties and replaced vision by doctrine. Since, however, it turned its passionately eager attention upon the details of actual life, it introduced into literature



a new closeness of observation, a new power of reproducing the very texture and rhythm of life. And this power has remained a permanent and priceless possession.

In its acutest form the life of doctrinal naturalism was quite brief. Only a few men of blunter artistic sensibilities, like Max Kretzer (b. 1854), the first of the naturalistic novelists, clung to it steadily. The vast theoretical claims of science soon dwindled and rapid and effective social legislation ameliorated, to an extent unparalleled elsewhere, the condition of the masses. The German mind, therefore, soon turned to contemplate, with entire freedom, the life and fate of the eternally separate human personality. Not, however, before doctrinal naturalism, in the hands of a few calm and temperate artists, had produced works of far more than passing interest and power.

George Moore has very justly pointed out that all the naturalists mastered form, building their books logically and writing them with high expressiveness of style. In Germany, too, the novel lost its romantic unwieldiness and slipshodness,

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and the always rather amorphous *Novelle* became organic. To-day the German novel, in fineness of stylistic texture and beauty of structure, yields neither to the French nor to the English. And this change, too, is due to the efforts of the naturalists. Men of moderate gifts and originality, like Heinz Tivote (b. 1864), began to write with a structural finish, a self-contained mastery of their medium that would have been the despair of the most notable masters of an earlier period. The creative imagination disciplined by constant contact with reality, expressed itself in severe and severely organized forms.

From the very extensive group of German thesis-novels (*Tendenz Romane*), or novels of doctrinal naturalism, I select two. We are not unfamiliar with this kind of art in America. But neither Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* nor even a book of such sound intention as Winston Churchill's *The Inside of the Cup* will bear comparison with the calm, elemental strength of *Büttner the Peasant* by Wilhelm von Polenz (1861-1903) or with the cool yet sensitive nar-

ration of *Sylvester von Geyer* by Georg von Ompteda (b. 1863.)

*Büttner the Peasant* (1895) is the story of the downfall and economic ruin of an independent peasant farmer. For many generations the Büttners had tilled these fields and the very souls of the sturdy race had come to cling to this particular bit of earth. This tenacious love of the soil is nowhere stressed with romantic fervor; it is treated with a grave and almost silent reticence. The present owner of the farm, Traugott Büttner, when entering upon his inheritance was forced to assume heavy mortgages. Not the toil, the energy and the sobriety of all the years can save the farm. One loan leads to another, the strong old man becomes hopelessly involved. During the very hour in which his land is being sold in the court of the neighboring town, he plows once more his ancestral field, wrung by a sense of the blind injustice that rules the world. A notable creation, this man, quite equal to old Tulliver in *The Mill on the Floss*, perhaps even more intensely seen and clearly projected. Almost as

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good are Büttner's wife, his sons and their wives, his daughters and the village folk. Not so the characters who represent the antagonistic forces of the struggle. For these, in a far more specialized sense than the Büttners themselves, are the instruments of social and economic forces, the forces, namely, that destroy the farmer and his family. And it is here that the weakness of doctrinal naturalism betrays itself. You cannot reduce human beings to their sociological and economic functioning without leaving out their humanity. The inn-keeper and the money-lender had their own human passions and sanctities; each could have made out a case for himself; the latter, at least, could have laid the blame for the part he played in the destruction of the Büttners upon historical and economic forces that had molded him and his kind. The other necessary fault of the thesis-novel is this: its structure is too intellectual, following not the rhythm of life but the steps of an argument. *Büttner the Peasant* is admirably constructed and Polenz is very eager to hide the polemic purpose he has so much at heart.

Yet we are always aware of that purpose. Neither the massively conceived and executed characters, nor a deep, clear sense for the elemental things of earth and sky, can make us forget that we are reading a contribution to the agrarian problem at a certain period of the economic history of Germany.

A far more delicate piece of work is *Sylvester von Geyer* (1897). It forms a link between the novel of doctrinal naturalism and the novel of pure naturalism: doctrinal naturalism that observes and then arranges its observations in order to prove, proclaim or justify an opinion or a doctrine: pure naturalism that yields itself to the physical and spiritual texture of human life and makes a record too deep for special pleading, too complex—like that life itself—to be interpreted by intellectualistic formulæ.

Ompteda's avowed purpose is to illustrate the life of "a typical stratum of the German people to whom it owes much that is solid and great, much that has made it what it is in the world to-day." Despite this doctrinal statement and the

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obviously heavy documentation—very exact and very artistically woven into the book—the reader is soon absorbed by the special and unique charm of the strangely troubled soul of Sylvester von Geyer. The other characters, too, play their parts out of a full and not a social or economic humanity. One hears, indeed, pointedly the rumor of time and change; as in a far greater book to be discussed presently, the generations show a profoundly significant change in nervous organization. But there is little attempt to interpret this fact by some narrow doctrine or some merely external cause. The cool and somewhat pale, but beautifully tempered narrative, with its high honesty, its sad sincerity, rolls on to the appointed tragic end. The modern novel cannot show, in any language, many books of greater spiritual distinction and charm. In German literature it marks the liberation of the novel from the influence of Zola and its development into a native form of pure and self-sustaining art.

### III

#### THE NATURALISTIC LYRIC

THE revival of lyric impulse and accomplishment which is, in some ways, the most notable thing in modern German literature, also began under the banner of naturalism. We are very familiar with the insistent cry that the modern poet treat modern subjects, that forge and wheel and steam be rendered poetical. The younger German poets of the later eighties took up the gauntlet of modernity with a fine single-mindedness. They were weary of the dregs of romanticism in the verse-tales of the time; they were filled with social compassion, and it seemed to them that they were breaking very bravely with an outworn tradition. "The poet," Arno Holz (b. 1863), wrote, "should be no backward gazing prophet, blinded by idols that he cannot grasp." He proclaimed himself "only a poet of doctrine" (*Ten-*

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*denz Poet*), his vision of spring is in a great modern industrial city, in the streets of Berlin he found the themes for his eloquent and often sonorous verses. He committed all the follies of his enthusiasm and even wrote absurdities.

"To wretchedness a bite of bread  
Is nobler than the whole of 'Faust.'"

Yet he had his share in arousing German versification from the languid prettiness into which it had fallen; his use of proper names in verse, his adaptation of so stately a form as the *ottava rima* to contemporary subjects (comparable to Mr. Masfield's use of the *rime royal*)—these were excellent services to the cause he had embraced.

The very finely gifted Karl Henckel (b. 1864) (a social democrat of an even more pronounced type than Holz), declared himself in a similar spirit, "by his own choice a proletarian in the realm of art." His verses throb with pity and revolt and in his *Song of the Stonebreaker*, at least, he wrote a masterpiece, quite brief but memorable, of sociological poetry. Even the gentle and re-



flective Ludwig Jacobowski (1868-1900) described an impossible proletarian child mangled by a hungry dog and observed grimly:

"That happens when two mouths there are  
With but a single bite between them."

And he wrote character sketches that recall Henry's *London Types*, and visions of the half-world that suggest Arthur Symonds' *London Nights*, and at least one long poem of the tragic fate of a common modern man that is prophetic of all the methods found in Mr. Masfield's remarkable narratives.

These three poets and many others who shared their ardors and their beliefs had moments of purely lyrical inspirations. But primarily their poetry was one of protest and revolt. Far from them and the cities of their choice there had ripened the most commanding lyrical figure of their immediate time—Detlev von Liliencron (1844-1909).

This poet was marvelously fitted for his task: to liberate contemporary art from the passions of the propagandist, to create a naturalistic type of

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poetry for the modern world. Never was a man more in harmony with himself. He accepted his instincts and impulses without fear or reflection, and it is but just to say that they were all virile and magnanimous. Love and the sights and sounds of his native moorlands and the battles that made men and saved the fatherland—these are his themes. Torn by no doubts or spiritual conflicts he could identify himself wholly with the objects of his imaginative contemplation and render them with the utmost completeness. By reason of his masterful virility and sharpness of vision one might be tempted to compare him to Henley. But he has never Henley's note of strain, of excess, of despair; at the core of his work is a native, unacquired serenity.

Lamprecht has pointed out in the poetry of pure naturalism the presence of "poetic impressions of an intensity unachieved before, of a new sense of reality, of an observation that penetrates the intimacies of the phenomenal world in a manner absolutely new." This matchless vision of the concrete is the chief note of Liliencron's

style. The flicker of camp-fires, the creaking of a saddle-girth, blue smoke over the roofs of men, the rustle of a bird in the reeds, fog on a moorland—what other poet has rendered such things with so brief and effortless a finality?

It is, perhaps, worthy of note that Liliencron had fought in two wars and had risen to a captaincy in the Prussian army before, at the age of forty, he published his first volume of verse. He had thus seen some of the greater and graver passions at close range; he had been able to steep his consciousness in the appearances of nature and the characteristic gestures of life without the literary craftsman's torturing desire for the immediate translation of impression into art. Thus I account, in part, at least, for the freshness and clearness of mere sight, the simplicity and frugality of method by which he etched the scenes and figures that communicate his mood. For to call his verses graphic is to employ a worn and meaningless term. Art and nature seem in them, for once, to have become identical and the nobler sensations to have reached a supreme expression.

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At times his fine brusqueness of poetic manner would degenerate into mannerism. But at his best Liliencron is, in his field, consummate. He can rise to a noble plainness of speech, a naked pathos, that ally him to Wordsworth. And, in truth, the British poet and the German naturalistic lyricist set themselves the one aim: to interpret life upon a basis of truth, to use the ordinary speech of men, to wring poetry only from the immediate vision of the world of concrete appearances.

His form is perfect to the point of severity. He ridiculed the false rimes of the romantics. But except in the Sicilian stanzas to which he gives new flexibility and warmth, his form is never one made rigid by tradition. For his poetry is an immediate translation of life into art. The moods and passions create their own form and rarely brook the interposition of an alien artifice. Hence, too, the cadences of his blank-verse sketches are quite new: from homely and almost colloquial simplicity they rise to a grave and lofty sweetness that fills the ear and the heart.

The influence of Liliencron on modern German verse was both wide and deep. His trenchant veracity, his scrupulousness of form swept out of German verse all imagery that had not been intensely seen, all the too easy jingle of the last post-romantic versifiers. It also superseded the cool perfection of the Munich school. The poets girded their loins and practiced their art with a new sincerity and virile strength.

Nearest to Liliencron stands Gustav Falke (b. 1853), who started out, indeed, entirely under the spell of the older poet. But his blank-verse sketches are not so sinewy nor so lofty as Liliencron's and his modernism is less convincing. He has not, of course, his friend's incomparable single-mindedness in the acceptance of life—the heroic, I am tempted to say, the Homeric nature. But the very divisions and conflicts in Falke's soul enabled him to utter the one note that Liliencron lacked: the singing lyric cry that is always born of some dissonance between the poet and his world, some yearning for the unattainable. Falke's brief lyrics are, to be sure, like all

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German lyrics of their type, ultimately indebted to the folk-song for simplicity, delicacy of rhythm and a tragic implication of style. Unlike the romantics, however, he discards the archaism and the mannerisms of popular poetry. The songs have thus become his very own and in the impulse that shaped them there is the naturalist's exactness of vision and his sincerity. Hence, in them, lyrical loveliness of the most poignant kind is blended with a self-disciplined sobriety of emotion. They are not very many in number; they are permanent contributions to modern art.

Under the influence of Liliencron even the born romantics gained conciseness and concreteness of expression and form. Such an one is Carl Busse (b. 1872), a lyrical soul akin to Eichendorff or Möricke. His are the old eternal subjects of the romantic folk-tradition. But the phenomena of nature which he uses as symbols of his mood and thought are grasped with a beautiful exactness in form and color and yet lose none of their romantic magic and power of evocation. His verse is delicately musical and always of an unobtrusive per-

fection: the mind holds it long after the book is closed and sees his exquisite lyrical landscapes arise and blend with the dawn and dusk of the world.

Closely united to Liliencron and Falke by personal friendship and common aims was the brilliant and interesting Otto Julius Bierbaum (1865-1910). His was a joyous and more definitely pagan nature than Liliencron's; he had a far more conscious devotion to beauty. He was, indeed, an epicure of the beautiful and had none of his friend and master's homeliness and severity. Yet his verse, too, although it reaches out toward a later school and method, is naturalistic at bottom. His landscapes and his sanely sensuous adventures are never conventionalized in substance; nor are his moments of deep self-recollection (*Oft in the silent night*), nor those others in which he grasps with a haunting lyrical beauty a permanent spiritual problem (*The Black Lute*). But with his blithe delight in life, his vineleaves and lilacs and roses, his Josephines and Jeanettes, he would seem a very modern and very charming

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Herrick. But in his wonderful dancing song there is a tremor of the nerves that only our own age could have produced and understood; in his evening-song which deliberately uses, as Lamprecht has observed, the mood and even the meter of elder poets, nature is seen and interpreted with the naturalist's unprecedented keenness of sight.

With Bierbaum we have come a far way from the sociological verses of Holz and Henckel. Yet these men are all contemporaries, and the revolutionaries of the lyric have themselves, in their maturer years, abandoned the doctrinal naturalism of their youth. But this wide movement in German poetry which I have represented by Liliencron and Falke, Bierbaum and Busse, is unafraid of the details of the actual, shaping them not according to a traditional convention of poetic mood and purpose, but interpreting them with an immediate passion that is no less beautiful and—if you will—uplifting, for its loyalty to the truth of the outer and the inner life.



## IV

### THE DRAMA OF HAUPTMANN AND SCHNITZLER

THE temptation to use the stage as a pulpit from which to proclaim one's personal sense of moral and social values is, of course, a powerful one. From the art of the theater, therefore, doctrinal naturalism has never quite disappeared. As lately as 1911 Hauptmann defended his technique and his point of view in *The Rats*; in 1912 Schnitzler plead in *Professor Bernhardt* for a subtler spirit of tolerance. Nor would it be reasonable to assert that the thesis play has not a legitimate though humble place to fill. To lead men through the persuasiveness of art, that, too, has its value, but also its grave danger. Opinions perish: life and nature remain and carry their spiritual monitions that are too large and too subtle to be caged in any specific form of thought. This truth, that a work of art is likely to be ephemeral in pro-

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portion to the explicitness of its polemical or didactic purpose was soon recognized by the naturalistic playwrights of the German theater. Their strongest and best work rests in its own massive truth. It draws import and beauty from the gift of these moderns to see life immediately and as it is; even as science has seen the processes of nature as they are and not as some theological preconception would have them be.

The one aim, then, of every serious playwright of modern Germany has been to offer an imitation or interpretation of human life. Hence it is plain that the drama of Hauptmann and Halbe and Schnitzler which has been called "static" and "quietist" and other names in which is implied a comparison with the traditional artifices of the stage, should not be judged by the light of such a comparison at all. It should be judged by its own innermost intention which is, like the intention of every other sound and living human art, to offer what Matthew Arnold long ago demanded of the highest poetry—a criticism of life.

I have used the expression: interpretation of

human life. And that is, in truth, just what Arnold meant by his famous phrase. But I must hasten to stress a distinction that is at the root of the whole matter. We shall not understand the drama of modern Germany—nor, indeed, the novel—if we imagine that it interprets life by applying the measure of any anterior prejudice, any rigid standard, any assumption of what it ought to be. For “moral judgments,” as Hauptmann says in *Gabriel Schilling’s Flight*, “are, of course, only ways of avoiding thought and understanding.” Men live, inevitably, by embracing different sets of values. These values, as they are embodied in the practice of life, are set forth through character in the German drama. But the playwright scrupulously refrains from assigning to any such set of values an absolute or even a superior validity. The meaning of life is not summed up in a moral or a lesson or even a principle. The meaning of life is—life! From the concrete and particular human truth, if it be full and exact, arise the reflections and emotions that reach into eternity. Thus there are no heroes in the mod-

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ern German drama, and very few villains. But many of the souls who people that stage illustrate the struggle of all our modern world for new values and ideals by which life can be made more tolerable and more meaningful.

It is quite clear then why this drama has been called "static" and "quietist" and even undramatic. Like the drama of every age it exhibits character in action. But its aim is truth. And violent and external action is not a note of our civilization in its normal state. Even our gravest conflicts, those that arise from the clash between social and personal morality, are apt to be devoid of loud activity and sudden catastrophes, of events so involved as to arouse suspense of the cruder kind, of moral differentiations so gross and definite as to flatter the prejudices and soothe the self-approbation of the romantic crowd. No, the modern German drama stresses the moral and spiritual atmosphere into which men are born, the influences which make and often enslave them, the struggle of the true personality to possess itself, to become what it was really destined to be: in a

word, the supreme concern of this art is with character—character which makes life and is fate. And thus it happens that to each one of the naturalistic playwrights of modern Germany, not to Hauptmann and Schnitzler alone, will be granted some day Hazlitt's noble and yet sober praise of Hogarth, that "he has left behind him as many memorable faces, in their memorable movements, as perhaps most of us remember in the course of our lives, and has thus doubled the quantity of our observation."

Not to Hauptmann and Schnitzler alone! Such plays as Max Halbe's *Youth* and *Mother Earth*, Hirschfeld's *The Mothers* and *Agnes Jordan*, Hartleben's *Hanna Jagert* and Else Bernstein's *Twilight* have permanently enriched the drama of the language. Yet as time goes on those two figures are seen to overshadow all the rest, and to a national they have added a solid international fame. Hauptmann has, of course, by far the wider range and power; he has the gift of verse and the constructive imagination. But how admirably he and his Austrian contemporary supplement each

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other as naturalistic dramatists! One need but keep in mind a small group of either's characteristic masterpieces: *The Weavers*, *Drayman Henschel*, *Michael Kramer*, *Rose Bernd* and *Light o' Love*, *Living Hours*, *The Lonely Way*, *The Land of the Soul*. In Hauptmann's pictures of life the colors are strong, somber and definite. *Henschel* is a play of the bleakest winter, *Rose Bernd* of a burning, passionate summer. His men and women are impelled by hunger, by lust, by the primitive will to power, by aspiration. They have little eloquence of speech or grace of gesture, but move us as by our own woes which are also the unconquerable woes of all the world. The disharmonies between themselves and the universe are tragic and final. Humble souls that they are, they perish of elemental needs and are crucified in great causes. They are not beautiful, they are not wise, they are not pure: they are only broken and imperfect members of the family of man. Yet what rare spiritual energies they can wring from their confused and frustrated souls! Think of the steadfastness of Hilse, of Henschel's dumb

righteousness, of Kramer's service to his chosen cause, of the supreme vision in Rose Bernd's repentance. This common human clay is so stained, so dishonored by the hardships and conflicts of the earth. Yet, at times, when fate strikes it, there sounds a music as from another world. . . .

In Schnitzler's plays it is always either spring or autumn. There are white lilacs or russet leaves—each with their nameless pathos. The people in his plays—these Germans of the south—take life less sternly. They even discard it more gracefully, though they love it with so wise and warm a love. Most of them are extremely civilized, members of an ever-increasing class in the modern world. They have the power of seeing their passions objectively, of analyzing them; they have the gift of musical and subtle yet constantly natural speech. They seek the pangs that give meaning to life and a sense of infinity in the midst of impermanence. They will not avoid the austerer passions and duties; but they do not court them. Reflection has mellowed and tempered their innermost selves.—Imagine a fair, wide

street in spring. There are snow-drops and hyacinths in the gardens and the window-boxes, and at the end of the street is a park in full foliage with a lake and old marble benches. Through an open window you see a sweet-browed woman at the piano. She is playing Mozart with long, pale, sensitive fingers. Your eyes and hers meet and you go in to kiss her hands because death is sure and beauty and delight can make the moment immortal. . . . This scene is not in Schnitzler's plays. It is only my own halting fancy. But into it, perhaps, has stolen something of the spirit of the great Austrian.

Hauptmann and Schnitzler—what other modern dramatists have given us so much of the savor of reality, of the living body and soul of man? They have done so because they have not measured life by the rule of Greek or Christian, or by any special set of rejections and acceptances: because they have practiced the greatest of the modern arts—the art of observation, and used that fine modern faculty which Arnold long ago called the imaginative reason.



## V

### THE NOVEL OF PURE NATURALISM

THE very richest results of that modern art of observation cannot, perhaps, be found in the modern drama. For the drama has become a record of spiritual culminations and our playwrights are loth to strain our poetic faith by conventionalizing space and time in the Elizabethan fashion. The chronicle play is quite dead. Thus the long, level passages in human life during which forces gather and passions are born lie beyond the range of the theater. It is not strange then, that despite the great and permanent addition to the drama made in our time, the novel would still seem to be the most representative art-form of our complex, nervous, reflective modern world. We should be quite thoroughly aware of that in America. No playwright among us has approached, however remotely, the power and importance of Edith Wharton or Theodore Dreiser.

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In Germany, to be sure, great work has been done in the drama. Not greater, I am sure, however, than in the novel. That form was slower, no doubt, to throw off didactic intentions and doctrinal purpose. Having done so, it rose at once to an extraordinary height, and there are not very many names in the imaginative literature of our time that have a better claim on us than those of Clara Viebig (b. 1860), Gustav Frenssen (b. 1863) and Thomas Mann (b. 1875).

Clara Viebig combines, in an unusual degree, passion and objectivity, swiftmess and steadiness of mind. There is a white heat at the core of her work. Yet when that work is at its best she renders life very fully, with all its homeliness and all its soul. In style she is not the equal of either Frenssen or Mann, but her language is always strong and adequate. She checks her fine impetuosity of spirit and men and things stand sharply before us in their nature as they are.

She has written no book that is weak. But since I must select among her works I choose two rather different products of her talent—*Our*

*Daily Bread* (1902) and *The Watch on the Rhine* (1902).

*Our Daily Bread* is an intensive study, full, close and massive, of the life of the Berlin poor. The protagonist is a servant-girl and I cannot pay the book a higher or a juster tribute than by saying that, both in theme and development, it scarcely suffers by comparison with George Moore's *Esther Waters*. Clara Viebig, like the eminent Irishman, tells an unvarnished tale. She shrinks from no brutality and from no squalor. But she does not write in a brutal or a squalid spirit, rather with a profoundly earnest sense of the pitiableness of man and of the spiritual meaning that suffering gives to the plainest and ugliest facts. And, like George Moore again, she is temperate. Her compassion gilds neither the people nor the facts; she indulges in no false heroics over the homespun stuff of life. But the rugged and magnificent truth of her characters and their habitations and of the interrelations between them! Having read the book, you are teased by no social or economic panaceas, your

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subtle sense of superiority has not been flattered, your silly habit of moral indignation is in abeyance. For you have heard from these stern and simple pages

“The still, sad music of humanity,  
Nor harsh, nor grating, though with ample power  
To chasten and subdue.”

In *The Watch on the Rhine* she selects a larger canvas. The real theme of the book is the change from the separatist and provincial to the national spirit which came over the German people between 1830 and 1870. It is significant of the processes of modern art that there are no historical places and no public characters in the book. We have one glimpse of Frederick William IV of Prussia in his carriage. That is all. What Clara Viebig shows is the smoldering soul of a people: the long and sultry waiting, some flash that relieves the national energy. Then again the sense of insufficiency and frustration, until all the flames burst forth and the great days dawn and the book ends with an eternal name and date—Sedan.

The scene is old Düsseldorf whose people, in the words of Josephine Rinke's grandfather, cared neither for nation or empire. They were Düsseldorf burghers as they had been from of old. Into the merry, easy-going life of the Rhineland city comes the Prussian corporal Rinke. His nature is narrow and dry and without grace. Clara Viebig leaves us in no doubt as to that. The children of the Rhine have all the charm and attractiveness. But the dour Prussian has one austere and magnificent virtue. He can identify his will with a higher, super-personal will and purpose; he can serve in a great cause with complete effacement of self and stern self-discipline. Something of that spirit passes into his daughter Josephine, child of Prussia and of the Rhineland. And when, after long years, she rejoices that her lad was privileged to die on some field in France to help give all Germans a common fatherland, her deep-souled and appealing figure symbolizes the gift of Prussia to Germany and to the world.

An even higher optimism animates the work of

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the Holstein country parson, Gustav Frenssen. Not the false optimism that refuses to see life as it is, substitutes some foolish vision of how it ought to be and builds moral Utopias that serve only to betray their authors' parochial crotchets. Frenssen's world is an intensely real one. You hear the crunch of the plow in that hard soil, the wind in the wheat of summer, the lash of rain: you smell the keen tang of the surrounding sea. The land is very ancient: every foot of it is drenched with the blood and tears of a stubborn and heroic race. They seem to grow out of the very earth of their homeland, these tall, blond men and women with shining eyes. The worst of them are wastrels and hard drinkers; the best no pallid abstainers from the fray of life, but seekers for serener values in the "holy land" of the soul. Frenssen has been charged with too frank an acceptance of the life of the senses. Unjustly, I think. If the holy land be not sought by men as they are, none will seek it. Or is it to be peopled by Prohibitionists and prigs? The strong and vital soul has no time for nega-

tive commands. It seeks, it strives. Being human, it errs and falters by the wayside, but wastes no time in bewailing its humanity which is harmful but in the failure of self-mastery. Such an one is Jörn Uhl (*Jörn Uhl*, 1901), such an one Kai Jans, the protagonist of *Holy Land* (*Hilligenlei*, 1905).

Frenssen is a prose stylist of a high order. He tells his stories with a patriarchal deliberateness that reminds one of the idyllic books of the Old Testament. But beneath that breadth and simplicity a very subtle artistic intelligence is at work. The adjectives are plain but they are used with a new freshness and pithiness and are full of color and savor and strength. Frenssen has not only read the Old Testament, but also Homer and Nietzsche, and this combination will not seem meaningless to any one who has followed the development of modern German prose. Thus his style has a primitive simplicity of effect and a remarkable concreteness. His words are things and visions, never concepts or symbols. And his characters relate to each other the anecdotes and

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folk-tales of their country-side, rude but as poetical as ballads. Thus he tells the tale of his peasant folk under the pressure of modern problems of the state and of the soul—hiding nothing, palliating nothing, yet leaving one with an impression of the nobility and spiritual sturdiness of man.

Remarkable as these books by Clara Viebig and Gustav Frenssen are, they do not represent the culmination of the novel of pure naturalism in German literature. That point of culmination is represented by the most important book of a much younger man—*Buddenbrooks* (1901) by Thomas Mann. How is one to convey an adequate notion of this extraordinary book? I might liken it to *Clayhanger*. But Mr. Arnold Bennett's strong and homely narrative has little intellectual or artistic distinction. Nor is it finished, and the sequels but increase one's sense of its fragmentary nature. Or shall I compare it to another fragment, the exquisite *Evelyn Innes* of George Moore? No. For though, in the totality of his achievement George Moore is



a greater writer than Thomas Mann, no single book of his has the breadth and variety, the intellectual energy and structural completeness of *Buddenbrooks*.

It is a very long book, like the great novels of the older English school. But neither Fielding nor Thackeray, timeless masters though they are, had any conception of structural harmony, of architectonic perfection such as Mann achieves. In its own medium and technique the book is as faultlessly built as the *Œdipus*. The function in the narrative organism of each of the eleven parts, of each section of each part, of each paragraph of each section was foreseen from the beginning. The style is very rich and flexible, full of color and constantly just in expression. But there is no note of excess, even in beauty, for that would have been cloying in so long a book. But in its plasticity it is always at the height of the given situation, whether of calm or of energy.

The story that Thomas Mann undertook to tell is that of the decay and extinction of a patrician family of Lübeck merchants. The idea of fol-

lowing the several generations of race, is, of course, not new. What is new is that Thomas Mann does not seek to illustrate the interactions between men and historical and social changes. These things are problematical. He accepts, as Richard Moritz Meyer well points out, the human beings who founded and continued the race as ultimate phenomena. He tells us what they became; he does not tell us why. We hear of the great events of the world only as they would be mirrored in the minds of this small group of men, not as the historian or the economist would see them. Romanticism touches the Buddenbrooks, and the revolution of 1848, the wars that preceded the empire, social unrest, Richard Wagner's music. And each generation absorbs more of the things that fill the world and vibrates more sensitively under cultural influences that refine but divide the soul. The sturdy single-mindedness of the old merchant prince yields in his son to a diminished practical energy blended with religious fervor, in his grandson—the chief figure of the book—to a shattering division between the prose

of life and the subtle distractions of the soul. His great-grandson, in whom the race is extinguished, is a fragile and neurotic child of genius who dies at fifteen. In a word, Thomas Mann tells us the history of the souls and nerves of men from the July revolution to our own insistent and complex civilization. Yet when I schematize the book thus and interpret it in the light of one idea, I am conscious of doing it a grave injustice. For it is so abundantly full of life and of the color and stir of the world. And it is so full of men and women, duly subordinated to Antonie and Thomas and the older Buddenbrooks, but carrying on so true and full-bodied a life in these vital pages. Yet Mann never skips, as Dickens did, from group to group of characters. The rhythm of the narrative is unbroken, the point of view unwavering, but all these many voices blend into the continuous rumor of hope and grief which is human life. If modern German literature had produced but this one book, it would not stand ignobly or ashamed among the modern literatures of the world.

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I must speak of one more phase of the search for reality in modern German literature—the attempt to know, by intensive analysis, the real nature of the life of the emotions. For it is with the emotional rather than with the reflective life that this psychological naturalism chiefly deals. Quite rightly so. In the realm of thought we all have a measure of veracity. But our emotional life, as Shaw has so plainly proven—if, indeed, it needed proof—is often a mere tangle of posturing and self-deceit. We persuade ourselves that we feel appropriately on various occasions and scarcely permit our real feelings to rise into the field of consciousness. To illustrate these real feelings, to tell of the inexorable instincts of the inner man, veiled indeed but unimpaired by the conventions of the emotional life—this is the chief aim of the prose-writings of Arthur Schnitzler (b. 1862).

Few people in America are aware of the existence of the Austrian dramatist's stories and novels. Yet these are notable even in an age of

admirable fiction. No one, in fact, has yet quite done justice to Schnitzler's narrative technique. He has been influenced by the French masters, no doubt. But his style has an inner warmth which the Latin genius rarely attains. His limpid sweetness and quiet felicity of expression, his interpretation of his subject matter by the delicate modeling of his rhythms remind one again of George Moore. From another point of view I am tempted to compare him to Henry James—the great James of the middle period, of *Broken Wings* and *The Lesson of the Master*—but I am reminded at once of James' vast exclusions and of his refusal to exhaust his subjects. Schnitzler, of course, excludes nothing that is pertinent. He has, very literally, the physician's union of ruthlessness and tenderness. He writes of a man: "He longed for freedom, for travel, for the distance, for loneliness, but he could not get away from her, for he adored her." And the truth of such contrasts, of such disharmonies in the inner life is unfolded with such insight and with so wise

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and firm a touch as to make these narratives a source not only of artistic delight but of a broader knowledge of the human heart.

It is hard to select from among his stories. They differ somewhat, of course, in interest and power. They are equal in execution because that is always flawless. Perhaps the most arresting of them, the last word, too, in psychological naturalism, is *Leutnant Gustl* (1901). In this story Schnitzler presents quite simply and yet very originally the contents of the consciousness of a young man during certain, perhaps trivial, but none the less fateful hours of his life. This is not done according to the commoner method of both James and Schnitzler, through narrative and analysis. The thoughts, as they actually formulated themselves in the man's inimitably genuine Viennese German, are set down. The result is a bit of human nature of astonishing veracity. A soul under the scientist's microscope. But Schnitzler's naturalism is neither polemic nor morbid. We are left in no doubt as to the fundamental fineness of that tenacity with which the

little lieutenant clings to the best ideal which it has been his to know.

It is difficult to formulate any final description of the rich, sad and yet so incisive art of *Mrs. Bertha Garlan*, *A Farewell*, *The Dead are Silent*, *The Stranger*, *The New Song*, *The Sage's Wife*. The style has an undertone of detachment, as though the stories were really written under the aspect of eternity. But its surface has a gentle glow, or, rather, a lovely and warm patina as on old statuary. The incidents are told and the characters drawn with the rarest insight, the keenest and most flexible intelligence, yet without a shadow of the merely clever. For Schnitzler is absorbed by the poignant beauty of life as it really is, as our true instincts bid us lead it, however we may strive and cry.

## VI

### REALITY AND THE MORAL LIFE

PERHAPS I can best close, as well as bring home to you the point of my interpretation of modern German literature in its dealing with reality, by referring to an error often tacitly but none the less firmly held among us in America. That error is the belief in the static nature of the moral life. In the physical sciences, in biology, even in theology, intelligent people adopt the developmental view as a matter of course. But in morals—using the word in its widest sense of *mores* or *Sitten*—the opinion prevails that, whatever development may have taken place in the past, the laws of human conduct have now settled into a permanent rigidity. If one picks up the average American play or novel or essay, it is clear that the author has observed life not in order to discover its real nature, but in order to illustrate an



antecedent theory of conduct, and the necessary and foreknown consequences of conformity to it or the reverse. And when an artist among us tells us not what we think the truth ought to be, but what it is; when he gives us an honest report of human life, uncolored by the delusions of a hollow perfectionism, his reception is apt to be one of irritable condemnation.

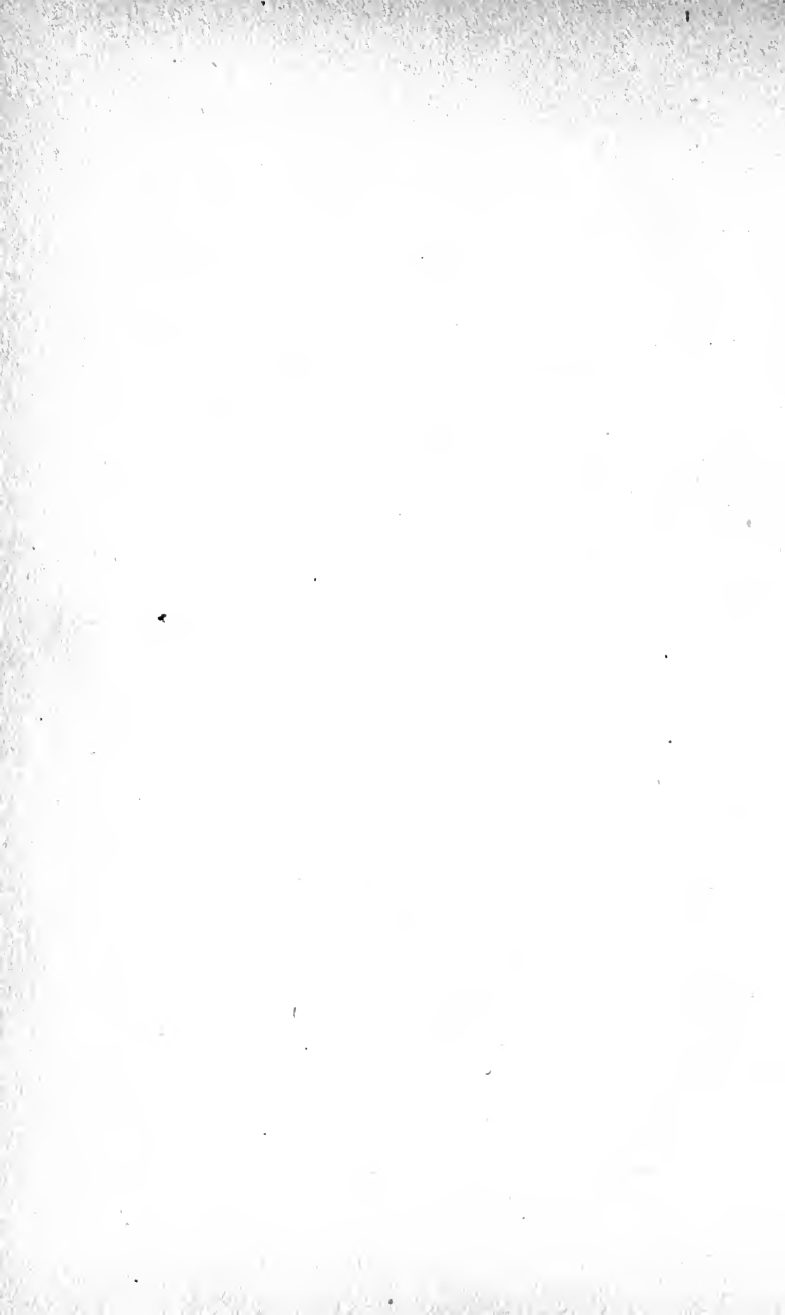
The modern German spirit knows no such despair in the real qualities of our common nature, and has addressed itself in art, as in science, on one whole side of its activity to understanding that which is. It has felt a deep reverence for the erring and aspiring life of the race, and has loved that life and the facts about it for their own sake. It has seen old values disintegrate and change in every other thing that concerns man, and has known that from this change his ideas of conduct can no more be exempt now than they have been during other periods in history. Hence while attempting to form new values or develop them from the old, that spirit has striven to know, in all its intimacy, the reality

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from which alone such values can arise. For the ideal, if it is to be more than an empty figment must express the true needs, the genuine longings of the souls whom it is to strengthen and to guide.

## **PART II**

# **THE SEARCH FOR INTERPRETATION**



## I

### THE PROTEST OF PERSONALITY

I HAVE already indicated the character of the second effort which the modern German spirit has made in literature—the effort to find new moral and spiritual values, to interpret the reality which it has so faithfully sought and so excellently recorded. To think of this second effort at all is to be brought face to face at once with one of the most commanding personalities of modern Europe—the great poet-philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900). I would at once stress the term poet-philosopher. For Nietzsche is not, in the narrower sense, a systematic thinker at all: his metaphysics are secondary both in importance and in influence. He is a seer, a proclaimer and a prophet. And the burden of his message which he has embodied in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* (1883–1891) in a form more enduring than

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brass, is that we recover a sense of the qualitative and save the noblest and most personal elements in human life from obliteration through the tribal instincts of an industrial democracy.

Do you recall Haeckel's saying that all modes of being are equivalent? Have you writhed under the cool observation of some contemporary schoolmaster that shopwork and Sophocles are equivalent instruments of education? Have you seen the machine-made houses, furnishings, churches, creeds, political opinions, ethical prejudices—the vast and awful spiritual levels of our own civilization? When such scenes dishearten one do not the words of Nietzsche seem like a prophecy and a judgment? “No shepherd and a herd! Each desires the same, each is equal to the other! But because life needs a height, it needs stairs and a conflict among the steps and among those ascending them.” Germany has been reduced to no such extremity. Yet even there it has been plainly understood, as Windelband puts it, that “the whole struggle of the individual against the uniform mass-life is em-

embodied in the poet Friedrich Nietzsche." We Americans should feel closest to him, for we need him most.

He begins with the fundamental truth that man's best and most characteristic attribute is the spiritual energy by virtue of which he creates values and thus gives a meaning to actions and to things. So each age and race hung over its head a tablet of laws prescribing its good and its evil. But a time comes when this good and this evil—obviously relative and transitory by nature—becomes devitalized, stale, a matter of soulless and cowardly social assent. Then what men call virtue becomes merely "a convulsion under the lash . . . or the withering of vices," then all self-direction in human conduct is lost. "Ah, that ye understood my word: do, by all means, as ye will, but be first such men as can will." And such a time has come. Hence he proclaims the function of the modern spirit: "To create freedom and a sacred 'no' even in the face of duty . . . to take the right unto new values." "How weary am I of my good and my evil!" he ex-

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claims. And he warns men against judging out of the pharisaism of their transitory and outworn values: "Enemy ye shall say, but not evil-doer; sick man but not scoundrel; fool but not sinner."

Nietzsche is the sworn enemy of all that is negative—mere shirking, mere conformity, mere worldly prudence in the face of valorous instincts.

"Men desire at bottom one thing most: that no one does them hurt. So they anticipate the actions of others and do good to them." He is the enemy of all over softness, of that mad humanitarianism that sees in pitiableness a positive good and a menace in strength and virtue. Yet he avoids, upon the whole, the other extreme and, compared with Tolstoi, remains a moderate and temperate thinker. "That I saw the sufferer in his suffering, thereof was I ashamed for the sake of his shame; and when I helped him I sinned against his pride." These pure, proud words seem harsh to a civilization that teaches the average to be smug and self-sufficing and looks upon excellence with envy and distrust. So powerless to gain a keen sense of such qualitative dis-



tinctions as give meaning to life did Nietzsche regard the generations which he saw that he uttered his profound commandment: "My brothers, I council you not to love the nearest; I council you to love the farthest," and that he bade all true men be "arrows of yearning unto another shore."

It is at this point that he has been most misunderstood. He councils hardness as an antidote against an exercise of compassion which retards development by subordinating higher to lower values—strength to weakness, wisdom to folly, health to disease. By an extreme which naturally grows out of this position Nietzsche is hostile to the modern state which, especially in Germany, guards and nurtures the "far too many." "This is what my great love of the farthest demands: spare not the nearest." It must be kept in mind, however, that his hardness was all in the service of a higher, of an ultimate love, even when he says: "And whom ye cannot teach to fly, teach him to fall more swiftly." This is, of course, dangerous sociology. But who that watches our

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civilization, at its normal levels, with an unimpaired sense of true values will grudge him the apocalyptic fervor of his speech? For in our softness and slackness and in our strange mixture of arrogance and timidity we have, as he explains, abandoned the basic ideal of social man. "There is no harsher misfortune in all the fate of man than when the mighty ones of earth are not also the most excellent. Then all is false and awry and monstrous."

From his despair not so much over the ways and institutions of men, as over their very minds and souls, Nietzsche proceeds, quite naturally, to his conception of the superman. He simply transfers the developmental view of modern biology from the physical to the psychical life and reaches the vision of a race that shall be strong, harmonious and capable of a constant largeness and intensity of experience. It is a popular error to suppose the superman a splendid barbarian astride the neck of his slaves. For, according to Nietzsche, all men, in that age, will be supermen. The unfit, the far too many will have disappeared,

even as whole species and genera disappeared according to the Darwinian theory. Not some men but "man is something that must be overcome—the superman is the meaning of the earth"; not some men but "man is a rope suspended between animal and superman." Man "is a bridge and no end: deeming himself blessed for his noon and evening as a path to new dawns." He proclaimed his vision in ever deepening accents of faith and beauty: "Thus I love only now my children's land, the undiscovered, in farthest oceans; after it I bid my sails seek and seek."

The question obviously arises: From whom among us shall the superman be born? And Nietzsche's answer is: From those "whose footsteps have now so lonely a sound in the streets of men." "Ye solitaires of to-day," he cried, "ye exiles, ye shall some day be a people: from you who have chosen yourself a chosen people shall spring—and from it the superman." Contrary to the popular conception, again, Nietzsche was thoroughly aware of the practical dangers of these admonitions. Callow youths, the arrogant

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and the slothful may consider themselves among those chosen and take the liberties not destined for them. But what master has not been betrayed by those who called themselves his disciples? No other, at all events, has issued to them so stern a warning. "And though Zarathustra's word were an hundred times right; thou wouldst with his word ever—do wrong!" And again: "But this is not said for those who are long of ear. Nor is every word fitting for every mouth. These are far and subtle things." Few and solitary, then, are those chosen ones, the self-directing souls who have the right to say: "This is my good and evil . . . this now is my way!" And even those few must exercise that freedom only in the service of a transcendent ideal—in the service of that conscious will toward a new and better race. "Where all your love is, with your child, there also is all your virtue, Your work, your will is your neighbor." In the most personal relation of life the chosen are to be guided by their ultimate purpose: "Marriage: thus I call that will of two to create one who shall

be more than those who created him." Free personalities are to give birth to others freer and nobler still and thus, some day, the superman will be on earth.

But suppose we do not or cannot share Nietzsche's vision of the superman? We must remember, in the first place, that it is a vision, a poetical method, after all, of urging upon us certain ideals and values. It is neither a sociological plan nor an attempt at practical eugenics. The wealth and splendor of his teaching, however, lies in just this fact—that we may substitute another will and another ideal with its service for his own. And yet, must not every ideal include that hope for harmony and power and health and beauty which Nietzsche called—superman? What is most universal, in his teaching, at all events—after the transvaluation of values—is his description of that creative spirit—*des Schaffenden*—who has a right to shape new values which may, as I have pointed out, not be identical with his own, but who may live in their service, free of the restraints of the old. He will be, as ever, re-

jected of men. It is one of the notes of his creative character. "Folk and herd shall be angered at me. . . . Behold the good and righteous! Whom do they hate most? Him who breaks the table of their values, the breaker, the lawbreaker. He, however, is the creative one." And again comes his austere voice of warning: "Show me thy right and thy power. . . . Ah, there is so much mere lustfulness for the heights! . . . Free callest thou thyself? Thy ruling thought I would hear and not that thou hast escaped from under a yoke. Art thou such an one who should have dared to escape from under a yoke? Many a one threw away his last human worth when he cast off his serviceableness." But he who can endure this searching test is the noble man—*der Edle*—of Nietzsche's phraseology. "He who is noble creates the new and a new virtue. He who is good wills the old and that the old be preserved. . . . (The noble man) is a seer, a willer, a creator, a future himself and a bridge to the future—and, alas, also like unto a cripple beside that bridge." None quite attains the ideal, you

see, not even the tested solitary and creative soul, not Zarathustra himself! So Nietzsche warns the free spirit to be impelled in his great freedom which is also a great responsibility only by a love of the object of his striving. "From love alone shall my contempt and my warning bird arise; not from the slime. . . . Where thou canst love no longer, thou shalt—pass by." And finally comes his hardest and noblest saying: "What matters happiness? . . . I have long striven after it no more; I have striven after my work." To him, then, and to him only who can stand these manifold tests Nietzsche gives the command to break the table of the laws, to create new laws for himself and for mankind, to become that which, in the innermost core of his being, he was destined to become. "*Werde der du bist!*" It is clear, then, that even if we strip Nietzsche's work of its questionable metaphysics, and even discount the doctrine of the superman, there is left the noblest and austerest summons to freedom, fortitude and greatness in the personal life that ours or, indeed, any age has known:—there is left the

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inspired philosophic vision of that free creative personality, so tragically forgotten among us, but in all ages the giver of law and beauty and order to his kind.

I have purposely confined my quotations to *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. It is Nietzsche's greatest work, it is the one which has had the widest influence, and also the one in which he spoke frankly as a poet and seer. Its influence, one should emphasize, has not been merely, perhaps not even chiefly, ethical or doctrinal. No one capable of feeling the full force and beauty of the German language can separate Nietzsche's matter from his manner, the soul from the body of his book. For he is, quite clearly and literally, to any sensitive and trained perception, one of the five or six greatest prose writers in the world. He is as copious as Carlyle, but no shadow ever clouds his marvelous lucidity. He is one of the most figurative of stylists, yet every image has been made with the author's eye on the object. He uses no words with blunted or conventional meanings. There is no pale conceptual verbiage



in his great book. The words sing and thunder and are wroth; they are as sharp and concrete as heat or cold or pain. The syntax, by virtue of the archaic, aphoristic form, is very simple. The rhythm furnishes the orchestration of this style—cadences that are oftenest stern and heroic, but now and then melt into an enchanting sweetness. But all such analytical descriptions are halting and poor. The soul of Nietzsche's style is in a great radiance—a radiance strong and full but without excess of brightness. Read him and there comes to you the vision of a deep blue summer sky and of the sunlight on an endless field of wheat. . . .

The appearance of a stylist of this order of rank and originality in a literature not historically notable for its accomplishment in prose had, naturally, very far-reaching results. If Dehmel is right in speaking of the "surprising rise of word-craft in modern German literature" that rise is largely due to Nietzsche's example. Apart from the very many cases of direct and demonstrable influence, this example has acted as a deterrent.

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Men have simply not had the courage to write as flaccidly and conventionally as before and the whole tone of modern German writing in prose and verse has been raised. Doubtless other forces were also at work. But one may detect the influence of Nietzsche in the rich verse of Dehmel, in Frenssen's large simplicity, in the frugal perfection of Ricarda Huch. He has helped talents and temperaments as different from himself as possible to find and then to enrich the medium of their art. He has had few imitators; he has been, at some time, the master and teacher of all. You recall Dr. Johnson's pregnant though mistaken account of Dryden's influence on English verse? That account is but just if applied to Nietzsche's influence on modern German prose—he found it brick and he left it marble.

## II

### THE STRUGGLE OF PERSONALITY FOR LIBERATION

THE influence of Nietzsche, though slow at first to gather force, spread rapidly in the early eighteenth hundred and nineties. A period of social and economic readjustment had produced the art of the naturalist—the art in which the creative imagination strives to identify itself wholly with the phenomenal world. In its pure form that art endures and must always endure. Compassion, fine curiosity, love of the concrete and real for their own sake—these elements in human nature are constant and produce the art of the naturalist. But a counter-current set in and its swiftness grew under the new impulse which Nietzsche gave it. I may quote Windelband once more: “As a counter-pressure against that rule of the masses which presses its stamp upon the whole life of our

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time, there arose that strong and intensified personal life that desires to regain and to save its spiritual subjectivity." On the one hand, you observe, social compassion, social legislation, concern for the collective welfare—and naturalistic art. On the other, the reassertion of the eternal separateness and uniqueness of the individual and his struggle for liberation from the weight and uniformity of life.

Such a struggle for liberation is illustrated by Richard Dehmel (b. 1863), one of the most remarkable though also one of the most unequal of modern poets. "If art," he writes in the preface to his collected verse, "has any value in life, it is surely this: to keep alive the striving for perfection in the human soul." By perfection he does not mean, of course, the deliberate atrophying of all human powers to produce a pale and withered blamelessness. He means the fullest and most harmonious activity of all the faculties, tempered and guided by a pure and self-sustaining will.

Of this central aim of his life and art he was quite conscious at the very outset of his career.

Too keenly so, perhaps. In his first volume reflection predominates over passion and beauty—no healthy sign for a young poet. It is but fair to say, on the other hand, that some of these early verses are very notable in their depth and fullness of meaning. The book was characteristically called *Redemptions* (1891). The poet desired to redeem his individual from his tribal self and to create harmony from the confusions of love. Not to liberate himself from love and desire through abstention—to exchange a positive for a negative enslavement, but to experience, through love, harmony, clarity and beauty. This he has never succeeded in doing in art, nor, I believe, in life. But his struggle in its moods of gloom and splendor, of abandon and resistance has produced some of the richest and subtlest lyrical work in the world. I must give you the substance of one of Dehmel's early poems of reflection to bring out clearly his purpose and his ideal. "O man, you are to train yourself! And many will interpret that command thus: O man, flee from yourself! Beware of such people! Make your reckoning

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with the powers within you and without you. This is the choice: Is life to shape you, or will you shape life?" That is quite literally his conflict. Is it not ours too? And this representative character gives Dehmel's work its power over us.

In the two volumes that followed *Redemptions*, namely, *But Love*. . . ! (1893) and *Woman and World* (1896), it is possible to follow his struggle. There is a great fullness of biographical detail. Love is clearly, as he himself says, the turbid element in his life. Yet through love, too, he achieves, especially in *Woman and World* the highest triumphs of his art. In these volumes there is a lyrical presentation of the modern conflicts of sex that shrinks from no realities and no confusions of soul or sense. To transform life one must, of course, grasp its full reality and face all its facts. This Dehmel does and saves the grossest of these facts for art through his magnificent sincerity and earnestness, and the energy and splendor of his words and rhythms. Twice he attempts a liberation from and not through

love. For a time he yielded himself to the social sympathy that he shares with all his contemporaries and wrote a brief series of poems wholly admirable in conception and execution—*Sombre Outlook, Poet's Working-song, The Toiler, Harvest Song*. And once he sought refuge in the union of the solitary soul with the cosmic oneness and wrote his greatest poem—*The Harp*.

But, though he has always "expiated his yearning," he has always returned to love. There only, after all, he finds the intensity of experience that makes life new and strange and wonderful—ever more new and strange:

"Oh I have never so deeply known  
As often as our close embrace  
Made each the other, why thy face  
Grew pallid and thy heart made moan  
When all my being sought thy grace."

And yet he finds himself in the grip of a force which, strive as he will, he cannot shape or master. He tries to reconcile the irreconcilable, he breaks out into a humorous despair. But he never permits himself to rest, to be at ease. "Every car-

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icature bears witness to the god which it distorts," he truly says. It is the god that he seeks.

In his next volume *The Transformations of Venus* he turned resolutely from the world of individual experience and sought to master his problem by a generalizing and symbolical representation. The attempt, despite the really magnificent *Venus Primitiva* and individual passages of high interest, is a failure. For the poet's liberation from life must come through art, not through reflection and analysis. A mood seizes him; a passion shakes him. The creative act, the transmuting of experience into art, lifts the burden of the mood, breaks the tyranny of the passion. It renders both objective to the poet and projects them into an eternal and supra-individual world. They are now added to the sum of human experience and of the beauty of the world. The poet contemplates them and is free. If Dehmel had oftener been able to rest content with the unreflecting embodiment of experience in art, he would have become a greater poet than he is. He would not be so interesting or so representa-



tive of that spirit in modern German literature which I am trying to interpret. His significance and the deep hold which he has taken upon the youth of Germany lie in his tireless spiritual energy, in his struggle to develop himself, on the terms dictated by his temperament, into a free personality. To assimilate the realities of his nature into a higher, freer self-hood, to wring spiritual values from the activity of his primordial instincts, to transform passion into beauty, power, truth—such are the aims of this struggling Titan. And these aims give his work a tonic quality.

Finally, however, he seems to have realized his frequent failure to render his experience concrete and objective in art and so proceeded to write *Two Souls* (1903). This is a remarkably interesting poem. It is one of the three of four existing experiments at telling a story of modern, civilized life in verse. I do not forget the narrative poems of Mr. Masfield. But these seek their subject matter amid elemental events and primitive persons. It recalls a poem which I esteem far more highly: George Meredith's *Mod-*

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*ern Love.* Like Meredith Dehmel tells his story by episodes, but he uses a much more flexible form than Meredith's caudated sonnets. Nevertheless he succeeds in giving each poem of the sequence independence and unity. The realistic tradition firmly established in modern German verse gives him the further power of dealing quite frankly yet poetically with the obvious details of our civilization. One of the finest episodes of the whole poem consists of a conversation by telephone. I know how almost incredible this seems, because we have hitherto made next to no attempt to interpret our own lives in English verse. It is the least noteworthy aspect of the German poem.

The poem consists of three parts. And although Dehmel's energy of speech and rhythm and his power of evoking landscape never desert him, I must admit at once that the second part is romantic in the bad sense, and the third obscure. The first part, on the other hand,—and it alone is fifteen hundred lines long,—could not easily be too generously praised. No other poet has

handled the intimacies of modern life so freely, powerfully and poetically. The drive through the wintry landscape, the scene in the woman's drawing-room, the bicycle ride—these episodes unite the highest reality with the highest lyrical energy and charm. In the first part of the poem, indeed, none of the twenty-eight episodes should be singled out at the expense of any other. Each sets a new standard for the interpretation of modern life through the art of poetry.

But I must not, in view of the light which Dehmel's development and his experiments throw on my special and immediate aim, permit myself to forget that a poet's permanent interest rests, after all, upon his perfectly achieved products. Dehmel's true lyrical successes are not as many as is commonly thought. His fifteen or twenty best poems, however, belong to the most notable of our time. In them his passion and his vision of the world are perfectly fused. The style is dense without obscurity, the rhythms rich, the vowel-music varied and sonorous. Each of his deepest lyrical impulses builds its own form—a

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form inevitable, flexible within itself, yet of a fine severity of outline. He uses, at these moments, all elements of life to release and express his poetic passion and the false dignity of an older poetic convention is wholly abandoned. Like Liliencron, though in so different a spirit and with such different material, he merges reality and poetry into one.

To translate a poet is always to wrong him. But I am unwilling to leave this account of Dehmel without a single English illustration, however imperfect, of his quality and style.

The sky grew darker with each minute  
Outside my room, I felt within it  
The clouds, disconsolate and grey.  
The ash-tree yonder moved its crown  
With heavy creaking up and down,  
The dead leaves whirled across the way.

Then ticked, through the close room, unhurried,  
As in still vaults where men are buried  
The woodworm gnaws and ticks, my watch.  
And through the open door close by,  
Wailed the piano, thin and shy,  
Beneath her touch.

Slate-like upon us weighed the heaven,  
Her playing grew more sorrow-riven,  
I saw her form.

Sharp gusts upon the ash-tree beat,  
The air, aflame with dust and heat,  
Sighed for the storm.

Pale through the walls the sounds came sobbing,  
Her blind, tear-wasted hands passed throbbing  
Across the keys.

Crouching she sang that song of May  
That once had sung my heart away,  
She panted lest the song should cease.

In the dull clouds no shadow shivered,  
The aching music moaned and quivered  
Like dull knives in me, stroke on stroke—  
And in that song of love was blent  
Two children's voices' loud lament—  
Then first the lightning broke.

### III

#### THE EXPRESSION OF PERSONALITY THROUGH BEAUTY

It was but natural that men of a happier temperament arose who achieved the liberation, the self-directingness, the harmony of the Nietzschean command. They had their struggle; nor were these struggles without dust and heat. But all the discordant notes have been hushed, and no cry of conflict breaks in upon the liquid grace of Rainer Maria Rilke (b. 1875) the majestic sweetness of Stefan George (b. 1868), the ample harmonies of Hugo von Hofmannsthal (b. 1874). I have named the three poets who chiefly represent the cult of pure beauty in the modern literature of the German tongue. The name of Hofmannsthal is well-known among us; our eager study of the modern drama has persuaded us to accept him in an, at least, external

way. It is a painful reflection, on the contrary, how few people in America, except some professional Germanists, have ever heard of either Rilke or George. We are aware, at all events, of the existence of Émile Verhaeren and Henri de Régnier. Some of us have even read their books. And you will certainly not hear me belittle those subtle and admirable artists. But two of these three Germans are poets of an entirely different stature. If I dared, indeed, to outrage all normal critical susceptibilities, and forestall the verdict of time, I would say that, with the voices of Henley and Swinburne, of Carducci and Hérédia forever silent, Stefan George is to-day the first lyrical poet in Europe.

All the three poets in question have been reckoned among the symbolists. They transcend, I think, any such classification and seek their lineage among an older and larger order of poets. To begin with they are highly disciplined spirits. They have, in the sense of Nietzsche, achieved their true selves. Having done so, they proceeded, through this creative self, to shape the

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world: to let the imagination transform the phenomenal order into beauty. Or, from another point of view: Beauty is to them the ultimate meaning and reality of things which they draw forth and render permanent in the forms of art, releasing the eternal from the transitory. Their renderings of nature, though often very exact, are always drenched with spirituality; from life they wring its soul of beauty. And always they deliver themselves into the power of the creative imagination, deliberately estranged from science, from formal philosophy, from all the activities of the "meddling intellect." It is in this sense that Rilke writes:

"I am so fearful of the words of men,"

And Stefan George:

"Words escape us, words betray us,

It is song persuades the soul."

To sustain their intention adequately the work of such poets needs a faultless form. For form itself here is far more than the body of thought. It has a heightened spiritual significance and in-



terprets through its very character the reality it has absorbed and re-creates. And so we find, in fact, that in Rilke and George and Hofmannsthal there is no dust of the workshop, no halting experiment. All is perfect. If Rilke is at times trivial and Hofmannsthal obscure, it is, at all events, through no failure in expression. In their poems substance and form are neither divided nor divisible. Color and melody and rhythm interpenetrate their pure and serene substance and are interpenetrated by it. There is no such thing in their work as poetic ornament or decoration. The whole poem is one creative act.

The poems of Rainer Maria Rilke are all quite brief. They express a mood of the poet, or of an historical or of an imaginary personality. But all, even the concretest in subject—*Songs of the Virgins*, *Charles XII of Sweden Rides Through the Ukraine*, *The Minstrel Sings to a Royal Child*—are raised into a timeless region of beauty. "Give thy beauty freely," he writes, "without scheming or speaking. Be silent. It will proclaim thy being for thee and, in its thou-



sand fold sense, at last find every soul." To this ideal he adheres strictly. It is indeed characteristic of all this school of poets that it reveals itself to the public reluctantly at first, and guards its treasures rather than make them more accessible by any concession to a facile taste.

Rilke's art is extraordinarily intricate. These lovely and apparently effortless lyrics—each like a bell that gives forth one dark, full, faultless tone—are a never-ceasing delight to the student of the technique of verse. Their art is rarely obtrusive. Upon analysis, however, one perceives a marvelous use of alliteration, of assonance, of brilliant vowel contrasts and harmonies, of all the possibilities of internal and end rhyme. He is as notable a master of these arts as Swinburne. But his tempo is far more restrained and he makes a cult of concentration not of diffuseness. Swinburne, of course, dwells far more in the sunlight of the world's great affairs and emotions than Rilke. But the German poet is, in the matter of poetic technique, constantly equal to the English poet at his best and most restrained.

One could not illustrate the character of Rilke's art better than by recalling a stanza from *The Garden of Proserpine* ("Pale beyond porch and portal. . ."). Only we must remember that Rilke is deliberate and brief where Swinburne is impetuous and long of breath; Swinburne's measures are stormy, Rilke's drop—to use a fine image of Hofmannsthal—

"Like heavy honey from the hollow combs."

I despair of illustrating the perfection of these strangely beautiful verses. I have tried my skill on the opening of his *Autumn Day*:

"Lord: it is time. So great was Summer's glow.  
Lay now thy shadow on the dial-faces,  
In level spaces let thy tempests blow."

and I have caught, after a fashion, the exquisite internal rime. But nothing else. The English verse is cold and hard. No, I must quote a few lines, at least, in the original. Their mere music cannot fail to reach any sensitive ear:

"So klangen Knaben an wie Violinen  
und starben für der Frauen schweres Haar;

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so gingen Jungfraun der Madonna dienen,  
denen die Welt verworren war."

Or, in an even softer and subtler modulation:

"Und ich weiss jetzt: wie die Kinder werde.  
Alle Angst ist nur ein Anbeginn;  
Aber ohne Ende ist die Erde,  
und das Bangen ist nur die Geberde,  
und die Sehnsucht ist ihr Sinn . . ."

♫ On the one hand this art touches music where the medium itself is substance: emotion, vision, beauty; on the other, in its firmness and serenity, it touches sculpture of which, indeed, Rilke is an accomplished student and critic.

You will probably assume that a poet like Rilke uses a very precious diction. He has, on the contrary, deliberately cultivated plain and even prosaic words. But he places them in musical combinations so new and yet so inevitable as to lend them unheard of distinction and mystery and grace. Of these words he himself says:

"Sie sind noch niemals in Gesang gegangen,  
und schauernd schreiten sie in meinem Lied."

With Stefan George we enter the region of a

higher and austerer art. You cannot analyze his technique into a use of devices, however exquisite. One does not think of his poems as having been made any more than one thinks it of the odes of Keats. They have a regal ease, a full, temperate glow, a harmony that never cloyes by excess of sweetness. He is magnificently himself; he is indeed the leader and inspirer of this whole group. But he served his own apprenticeship under noble masters—Keats and Dante and Goethe.

He withdraws from the glare and noise of the world,

“Speaking alone and pure with star and cloud,”

journeying into an “austere and solitary realm” to find new names for things that are to reveal their ultimate meaning. “The transitoriness of the universe can rob me of nothing that was once truly mine.” And this possession is in his own subjective experiences which he molds by the power of his lofty imagination into visionary forms that have a complete imperishableness of aspect. Thus he lends dignity and splendor to the simplest lyrical motives, and evokes in poems

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of astonishing brevity his personal imaginative experience of both Hellenic antiquity and the Middle Age. He is not concerned of course "with history or epochs of development." He writes: "Every age and every spirit in shaping the strange or the past in their own way transpose them into the realm of the personal and the contemporary." Accordingly, that vision alone has permanence and such truth as is attainable, and the world is real and beautiful only in the image of it which a noble personality reflects. George's vision of Greece (*The Book of Shepherds*) may be taken as an example. The poems are short and written in firm, clear, serenely modulated blank-verse. Pictures and emotions are restrained and finite, seen and felt and then rendered with extraordinary precision. It would be hard to describe the result. But I can convey it by recalling to you Arnold's line

"Freighted with amber grapes and Chian wine,"  
or Keats'

"What little town by river and sea-shore,  
Or mountain-built with peaceful citadel,  
Is emptied of its folk, this pious morn?"

or, better still, the severe beauty of the opening and closing lines of Landor's *Death of Artimidora*. And George's poems are equally wrought throughout. There is no slovenly word, no weak line, no flagging of that truly shaping imagination.

In *The Year of the Soul* he records the forms of beauty and permanence that have grown directly in his own mind. Yet he warns us against seeking "the prototype in man or landscape" of his visions. "For this prototype has received such transformation through art that it has become devoid of significance even to the artist himself. . . . Rarely to such an extent as in this book are, I and thou the same person." In other words, even his most personal emotions have been transformed by the imagination until only what is eternal in them is left—that, namely, which his highest self, at its loftiest moments, approves and recognizes as worthy of artistic embodiment.

From this description of the character of George's art it might be supposed that he is cold and unhuman. Such is not the case. He does not, to be sure, cultivate facile and popular types

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of feeling. But he has lyrics of Goethean charm and warmth, lyrics that Schumann would have chosen in his deepest and clearest moods; he has stanzas, especially in *The Year of the Soul*, which are of a broad and rich, though always of an inviolably noble humanity. Nor is George difficult. Certain orthographic and typographical peculiarities of his books have given that impression. His medium is always crystalline; his substance wrought to a last clearness. And, finally, this cult of the subjective, the personal, may be thought of as something of a pose, or associated with laxness and a want of spiritual tone. It should be remembered that by George's fundamental assumption the personality that can lend endurance to its vision must be magnificently disciplined and austere. He is, in truth, one of the purest and severest of poets. No lines interpret his spiritual temper more closely than those which, with a loss of all their beauty and compact strength, may be rendered thus:

"Here by these shores that we land on  
Piercing desires give no rest—



Sunnier coast-lines abandon,  
Follow the sterner behest.

See that thine oar-arm strengthen!  
Slow with danger unseen  
Rocks, as the ripe years lengthen,  
Onward thy shallop serene.

Yield unto no consternation  
Bleak though the riddles that rise,  
To an austere constellation  
Lift thou the quest of thine eyes."

Hugo von Hofmannsthal is of a warmer, more impetuous nature than George. He has not always sought to externalize his inner experience in forms so statuesque and timeless. His lyrics are few, but some of them move us more immediately, especially the matchless *Spring Presage*, a poem which renders the chill, etherial magic of its scene as unsurpassably as the *Ode to the West Wind* renders the passionate longing and melancholy of Shelley's autumn stricken soul. Then, too, Hofmannsthal has not George's love of the untroubled. The beauty and expressiveness of human gesture and speech have delighted him more, and

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so he has projected his thoughts and moods in terms of movement and of action. Thus came into being those early one-act plays of his: *The Death of Titian*, *Yesterday*, *Death and the Fool*, which are not really drama at all, but project the conflicting forces, and fix in shadowy action the ideals, of the poet himself. Such methods presuppose a greater poetic copiousness, a longer breath than George's. And that is just what Höfmannsthal has. The long speech of Gianino in *The Death of Titian*, the first monologue of Claudio in *Death and the Fool*—where else in modern verse will you find passages so long and yet of a beauty so intoxicating? In Rostand? But Rostand is brilliant and eloquent where Hofmannsthal expresses the innermost music of the world's beauty, all the sad yearning of the heart of man. Splendid and sumptuous he is, but never without the warm glow of life. The mellow moonlight falls on dark lawns in his verses, the fountains splash, stars lie in the river. Or grave-eyed men and women walk in high, comely chambers, and their words are impassioned and

true and above singing in beauty. . . . The development of such a poet tended, of course, toward drama in the stricter sense. And we find him writing sparer, bolder, stormier verse when, as in *Electra* and *Ædipus and the Sphinx*, the figures of his imagination have detached themselves wholly from his personality and stepped out into the objective world.

In that discourse on *The Poet and our Age* which one never tires of quoting, for it will be seen, some day, to rank with the central chapters of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* and with Arnold's *The Study of Poetry* among the great documents of modern criticism, Hofmannsthal writes: "Everything that is written in a language and everything, I dare to assert, that is thought in it, derives from the products of those few who have ever dealt with that language creatively." Is that not deeply true? Has not the world become romanticized—down to paper-backed novels and Sunday specials in the newspapers—because a few great poets and visionaries, more than a hundred years ago, added strangeness to the

beauty of their speech? In that sentence of Hofmannsthal we perceive once more, at all events, the difference that exists between his and George's pursuit of beauty in speech and form and any kind of graceful trifling or loud display of literary technique. It has been said that words are things. They are far more than that. They are the soul of beauty and meaning which the poet breathes into things. And that is what Rilke and George and Hofmannsthal have done.



## IV

### THE INTERPRETATIVE NOVEL

You observe how closely allied such a theory and practice of art as Hofmannsthal's is to Carlyle's doctrine of heroes and Nietzsche's of the generosity of the free and lordly spirit. For Zarathustra says to his true disciples: "Insatiably does your soul strive after treasures and precious things, because your virtue is insatiable in its will to give. Ye force all things into you and unto you that from your well-spring they may stream back as the gifts of your love." Thus not only poets but also novelists and playwrights reinterpret the world through the transforming power of their imagination and give it back to their contemporaries. I must stress the word interpret. For the modern German novel and drama, even in their non-naturalistic phase, deal honestly with the stuff of human life. There is no corrupting |

of truth, no romantic deception as to the nature of things. But new values are wrung from the facts of life and types of character are chosen that express a striving after personality, personal values, personal reconciliation with man and God, and after joy. After joy. . . ! Because "by learning better to rejoice," says Nietzsche, "we shall best unlearn working and planning unto the woe of others." And that joy is to be found through greater fullness and intensity of the personal life. "Is it not," writes that remarkable woman Ricarda Huch, "is it not, in the last analysis, the highest thing in life to become wholly conscious of one's self and to expand one's spiritual powers to the utmost!"

Among writers of the interpretative novel pre-eminence probably belongs to three: Hermann Hesse (b. 1877), Helene Böhlau (b. 1859) and Ricarda Huch (b. 1864), whom I name in the order of talent and not of age. There are other finely gifted novelists of this type, such as Eduard von Keyserling (b. 1855), a master of color in literature, and Jacob Wassermann (b. 1873)

with his tropical glow and highly-wrought manner. But neither these nor many others seem to me quite comparable to the three names with which I started.

The novels of Hermann Hesse are very few and are short and quite lyrical in temper. His best books, *Peter Camenzind* (1904) and *Gertrud* (1910) are told in the first person and are full of singularly lovely and intimate descriptions of the scenery of South Western Germany. Both Camenzind, the scholar, and Kuhn the musician in *Gertrud* are ardent souls, full of yearning for life,

“And youth and bloom and this delightful world.”

Both fail to satisfy their yearning. Camenzind because he cannot express his true self to his fellowmen, Kuhn because he is a cripple. And so both books end upon a note of resignation. What connects them both with this phase of the spirit of modern German literature is not only their method. It is the fact that the two protagonists never despair of life, that from their very

insufficiency there arises a hymn to its beauty and multiformity, its interest and passion. In loneliness and failure they are still among the affirmers of life.

The foundation of Helene Böhlau's art is far more realistic in the narrower sense. She has, at least, a far greater mastery of detail than Hesse. She began her career with one of the most sunny-tempered books in the language—her delightful tales of old Weimar. But in her strongest works she depicts the modern woman's struggle after a free and self-contained personality and the conflicts that grow out of that struggle. In her best book, *The Shunting Station* (1896) this conflict, as R. M. Meyer observes, passes the bounds of sex in its implication, and the frail figure of a dying girl becomes the symbol of all those whose work, in the Nietzschean phrase, is their neighbor.

Both *Peter Camenzind* and *The Shunting Station* are admirable books. In interpretative power, in accomplishment of structure and style they would adorn any literature. I come now,



however, to a book of a very different order, to a masterpiece as massive and complete in its very different way as Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks*. It is the high water mark of the achievement of the most gifted woman of modern Germany: *The Recollections of Ludolf Ursleu the Younger* (1893) by Ricarda Huch.

In the first place Ricarda Huch has a prose style of virile firmness and of the highest intellectual distinction. She is said to have been influenced by Gottfried Keller. But I, at least, can never be persuaded that Keller wrote half so well. That style of hers is almost lapidary in its severity. It is so highly wrought and so finely tempered that it need not avoid the homeliest details, if it needs them, but raises them into its atmosphere of frugal beauty. Its rhythm is large and stately, its figures, sparingly used, attempt and achieve the beauty that is in classic restraint and in justness. "The earth pours out its endless overflow, but the basin we possess wherewith to catch it, is shallow and small." "Her spirit throbs continually like a fixed star:

I prefer the calm and steady glow of the great planets." And she has profound sayings which betray her participation in the light which Nietzsche shed upon the character of the moral world. "This is the nature of genius: that it must not follow existing laws but that, through what it does, it gives laws to the world."

The story, that of the tragic fate which befell certain members of a patrician family of Hamburg, is recorded, many years later, by a son of the house. By this method the book gains a great part of its peculiar charm. Ludolf can only set down the visions which his memory provides of his father and mother, his sister and his kinsmen. The continuity of the narrative is never broken, for Ludolf himself is, of course, in intimate touch with all the actors of the story and is thus the centralizing force in the book's structure. His memory, however, has most tenaciously held only the significant and tragic scenes. These arise before the reader's mind and remain there as among the most memorable things in all modern writing. Consider that silent incident,

for example, when there flashes from Ezard for the first time his open jealousy of Galeide who ministers to her father after her mother's death. The scene is as though cast in bronze: the tragic beauty of human gesture made permanent in art.

In the fated and fatal love of Ezard and Galeide, Ricarda Huch has once more dared to tell the story of a great passion. She has told it with an immense reserve that only heightens one's realization of its power. We know that the lovers met alone, for Ludolf suspects it. But they are never alone before our eyes, since we know only what Ludolf saw. And in the presence of others they avoid the touch of each other's hands, the glance of each other's eyes. Yet every one about is conscious of the great presence of a love which is sin and beauty and doom. Though they lose none of their humanity, these two rise almost into a legendary greatness and are allied with immemorial lovers of poetic vision, Guinevere and Lancelot, Tristram and Iseult. Yet they are so real and so modern. And in the end Galeide's long-sustained harmony

of character gives way and she falls victim to an alien and a lower love. But not until she and Ezard have been added to the precious possessions of the imagination.

## V

### THE INTERPRETATIVE DRAMA

THE recent German drama has, upon the whole, remained strongest on the side of naturalism. I am not without a sense of the merits of certain widely heralded plays in verse—Richard Beer-Hoffmann's *Count of Charolais* (1904) or Ernst Hardt's *Tantris the Fool* (1908). But they yield at once to Karl Schönherr's grim comedy of Tyrolese peasant life *Earth* (1907) and to his impressive prose tragedy of the Counter Reformation, *Faith and Home* (1910). I need not linger over these, however, nor over the more recent and more dramatic works of Hofmannsthal. We shall learn all that the drama can tell us concerning the second phase of modern German literature by turning our attention once more to Gerhart Hauptmann.

So lately as 1911, you recall, Hauptmann

wrote a whole play, *The Rats*, in defense of naturalism, of the search for reality, in its most uncompromising mood. Yet so long ago as 1893 he wrote *Hannele* which in its blending of the plainest, nay, the crassest reality with a high lyrical beauty drawn straight from that reality, may almost be regarded as a symbol of the whole movement and the whole spirit which I am trying to describe. And so Hauptmann continued to lead the dramatic literature of his country in both of its chief phases: *The Sunken Bell* was followed by *Drayman Henschel*, *Schluck and Jau* by *Michael Kramer* and *The Conflagration*, *Henry of Auë* by *Rose Bernd*, *Charlemagne's Hostage* and *Griselda* by *The Rats* and *Gabriel Schilling's Flight*. And these two naturalistic plays of modern life were again followed by *The Bow of Odysseus*.

Nor did Hauptmann, the most compassionate of modern men, the one with the most keenly troubled social consciousness, escape the new gospel of joy and of the free personality whose only gift to his fellows need be the gift of his new

values and of his work. It is true that Heinrich, the bell-founder in *The Sunken Bell*, fails. But only because he cannot meet the tests that free the soul for its work, because he has too little inner harmony and native power. Yet he is upon the Nietzschean path—he who desires to give men a new faith in which Christ and Apollo—sorrow and joy, abstention and expansion, reality and beauty—shall have become one: he who is utterly careless of the tribal rage of those to whom, under an eternal aspect, all his life and work are dedicated.

“For though an angel had hung down from heaven,  
 All lily-laden and with gentle sighs  
 Entreated me to tireless steadfastness,  
 He had convinced me less than those fierce cries  
 Of the great weight and purport of my mission.  
 Come one! Come all! What’s yours I guard for you!  
 I’ll shield you from yourselves!”

So Hauptmann, the lover of his humblest fellow-men, also pays tribute to the liberated and liberating personality.

In another group of plays he illustrates the

blending in modern German literature of the search for reality and the search for interpretation with striking aptness. In *Henry of Auë*, *Charlemagne's Hostage*, *Griselda* and *The Bow of Odysseus* he has chosen as his themes some of those great legends that have been for long a common possession of the Western mind. Now these stories have all become conventionalized in the course of time. The motives for the actions in them were few and of the conventionally heroic, religious or tribal kind. Hauptmann asks: What concrete facts, what human psychology, what real struggle of man with his world lie behind these stories? And so he tells of the rebellion and salvation of the princely leper, of the great emperor who suffered from the corruption of beauty, of the mediæval lord who loved his wife with so morbid a passion, of the subtle doubts that tugged at the heart of Odysseus when he came home to Ithaca. In a word, he seeks to interpret legend in terms of the known qualities of human nature and so blends reality and poetry, beauty and truth.



## VI

### GOETHE AND THE SPIRIT OF MODERN GERMANY

How can I best sum up what I have been trying to convey to you concerning the spirit—twofold and yet so deeply one—that animates the modern literature of the German tongue? How can I most clearly draw together these various strands of reflection and interpretation? By appealing to that sovereign master who included in his activity and his vision not only his own age, but the age which was to come—by appealing to the spirit of Goethe. And I do this with the more satisfaction as it has been asserted—how rashly and ignorantly only those who are in full possession of the facts can justly estimate—that the literature of modern Germany has broken irrevocably with the teachings and the influence of Goethe and with the humanism of the classic age.

I need scarcely recall to you that Goethe was

not only poet and sage but also man of science. He had, to a considerable extent, therefore, the modern habit of observation, the modern respect for fact. He had grasped, above all, the fundamental truth on which rests all of modern science and all of naturalistic art—the truth that the concrete is the eternally significant. “If thou wouldst fare into the infinite,” he wrote, “follow the finite in all directions.” And again: “If thou wouldst rejoice in the whole, learn to see the whole in the humblest detail.” Nor did he fail, long before the date of these sayings, to apply their doctrine in art. Literature had not seen and is not likely to see life treated with a nobler reality, a saner frankness, than it is treated in the incomparable scene *Beyond the City Gate* in the first part of *Faust*. The scene is brief and so is that other scene between Gretchen and Lieschen beside the well. But the poet who wrote those lines loved reality for its own sake and rightly declared in his old age: “At bottom no realistic subject is unpoetical, if only the poet knows how to use it properly.”

And it was from his profound knowledge of the real nature of the world and of human life that he derived his magnificent individualism, his distrust of anything but the truly excellent, and his admiration for spiritual energy as opposed to a mere conformity to any given set of social or ethical values. It is the spiritual energy of Faust, you remember, that turns all evil into good and shames the devil. The devil cannot be shamed by a prudent abstention or a cold conformity. The famous line in *Faust* is familiar to all:

“Es irrt der Mensch so lang er strebt!”  
(And man still errs the while he strives.)

Therein lies the meaning of life! And Goethe repeats the doctrine in his gnostic verses:

“When all things hum in head and heart  
What better wouldst thou have?  
Who loves no more and errs no more  
May sink into his grave!”

And each man, according to Goethe, must choose for himself what will help him, what his spirit can transmute into higher values.

"One thing is not fit for all!  
Let each govern his own striving,  
Choose him his own path of living,  
And who stands, guard lest he fall!"

Thus will arise the personalities, the great givers who can help the world, even as Faust turns ultimately to saving a "free land" for a "free people." "The world," Goethe said, "can be helped only by the extraordinary." And the extraordinary can be attained only by free development. "Each must in reality," he declared, "form himself into a peculiar being, but must seek to reach a conception of what men are collectively." He called himself a liberator of his people because he had taught them by his life and work that man must live "from within outward." (*Von innen heraus leben.*)

I need not persuade you, of course, that modern German literature has, in an even higher degree than Goethe, respect for science, love of the concrete and a sense of its significance. The whole naturalistic phase of its activity proves

that. But let me ask you to compare the sayings of the moderns with the Goethean doctrines. "*Werde der du bist!*"—"Become what thou wert truly meant to be," says Nietzsche. "Each must in reality form himself into a peculiar being," Goethe said, and "man lives from within outwardly." "One thing is not fit for all," Goethe tells us. And Nietzsche: "This is my way! What is thine?" It is the Lord himself, the inner spirit of the universe's wisdom, who says in the *Prologue in Heaven*:

"And man still errs the while he strives."

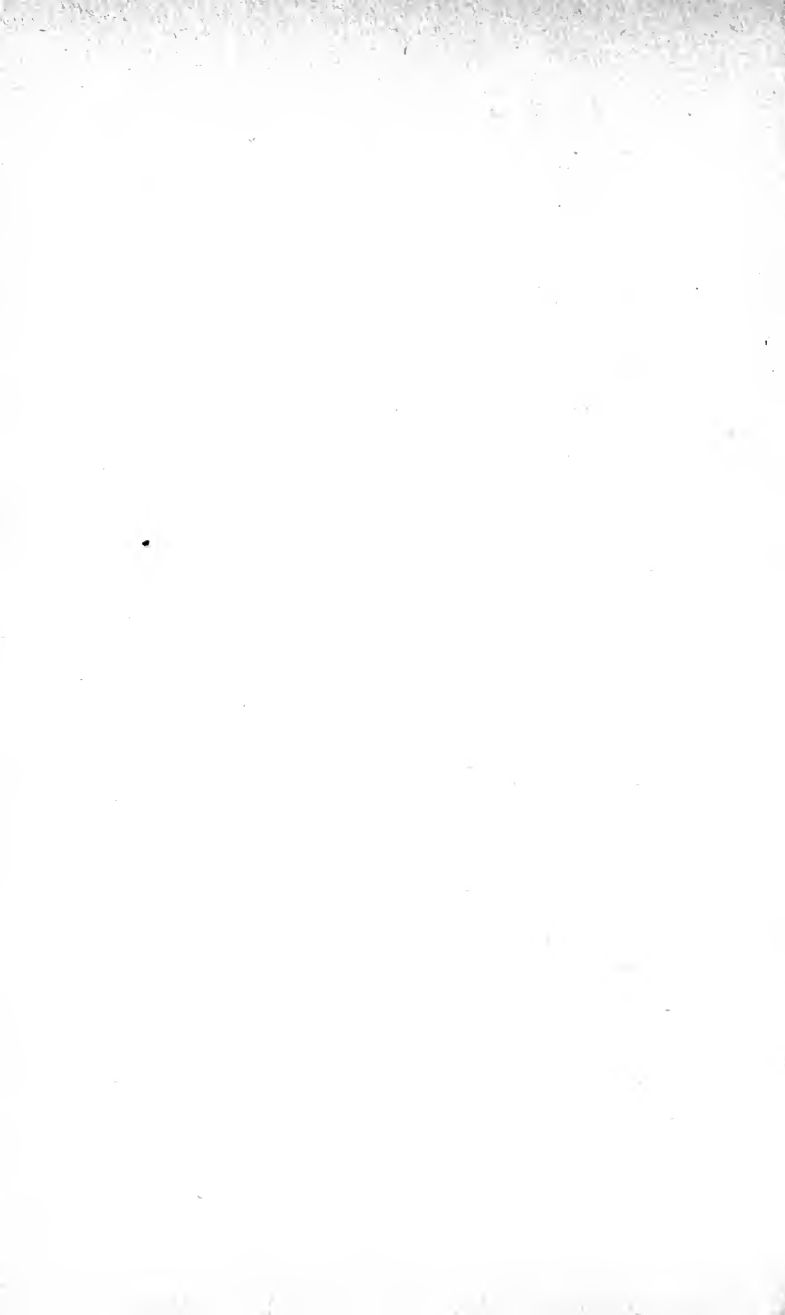
Listen to Richard Dehmel: "Even though thou err upon the hills of striving, it is not in vain. For thou becomest thyself. Only: remain master of thy striving." And hear Hauptmann:

"And they who strive are they who live albeit Erring. Tireless to strive is still to be Upon a goodly road."

Allowing duly, then, for the enormously increased complexity of the social and psychical

life of our age, what real difference is there between the two-fold spirit of Goethe—mastery of fact and the transmuting of fact into higher values by free personalities—and the two-fold spirit of modern German literature? For in it we find on the one hand: naturalism, cultivation of science, social organization for the collective welfare and practical efficiency—*Tüchtigkeit*, again a favorite Goethean word; and on the other hand we find: an individualistic humanism, the cult of beauty as “a rest in the whirl of existence,” the widest moral and intellectual liberty and tireless spiritual striving. Striving—*Streben*—that is the central word. And this very watchword of the German spirit has recently been criticized as a concept empty of any real content. Wrongly! For it includes and transcends all specific forms of human energy. It means nothing less than the grasping of experience in its totality through an impassioned yet self-governed participation in its concrete forms, in order that there may arise values ever higher and more personal which shall make life, for a

constantly increasing number of men, deeper, richer, more reasonable and more beautiful. That is the spirit of modern German literature: that is the spirit of modern German civilization.





## **COMMENTARY**



## COMMENTARY

### PART I

#### I

P. 8. Karl Lamprecht. *Vide his Deutsche Geschichte. Zur jüngsten deutschen Vergangenheit. Erster Ergänzungsband.* Berlin, 1902. P. 208.

P. 11. "In Eucken's weighty words," etc. Rudolf Eucken: *The Problem of Human Life.* New York, 1912. P. 568.

P. 12. *The Poet and Our Age.* Hugo von Hofmannstahl: *Die Prosaischen Schriften.* (4 vols.) S. Fischer, Berlin, 1907. Vol. I. Pp. 16, 18 and 24.

P. 12. "If the student of literature," etc.—The whole movement in the modern German plastic arts and crafts may be studied in that admirable monthly, now (1916) in its nineteenth year: *Deutsche Kunst und Dekoration.* Darmstadt, Verlagsanstalt Alexander Koch.

P. 13. "Wood and ceramic media," etc. Such as the *Mutter und Kind* of Paul Peterich, and the singularly impressive wooden statues of Ernst Barlach. *Vide* Wilhelm Radenbergh: *Moderne Plastik*, one of the charming and very inexpensive *Blaue Bücher* published by Karl Robert Langewiesche, Düsseldorf and Leipzig, 1912.

## II

P. 18. *Büttner the Peasant. Der Büttnerbauer.* (10th ed.) F. Fontane, Berlin, 1906.

P. 19. *Sylvester von Geyer.* (12th ed.) Egon Fleischel, Berlin, 1906.

P. 21. "A typical stratum of the German people," etc. *Vide* Introduction to *Sylvester von Geyer*.

## III

P. 23. Arno Holz: *Das Buch der Zeit.* (New edition.) München and Leipzig, R. Piper & Co., 1905. His famous *Program* (p. 33) must be quoted:

"Kein rückwärts schauender Prophet,  
geblendet durch unfassliche Idole,  
modern sei der Poet,  
modern vom Scheitel bis zur Sohle."

P. 23. "A poet of doctrine." *Ibid.* P. 67. *Selbst-porträt.*

P. 24. "To wretchedness a bite," etc. *Ibid.* P. 225. Yet in the very series of poems, *Phantasmus*, from which the lines are quoted Holz has stanzas and whole sections of real nobility and power. Nor should it be forgotten that he is the author of that little masterpiece of lyrical genre work: *So einer war auch er!* *Ibid.* P. 76.

P. 24. Karl Henckell: *Trutznachtigal.* Karl Henckell & Co., Zürich and Leipzig, 1891. "By his own choice," etc. P. 87. But immediately on p. 88 he has a lovely and entirely undidactic lyric: *Komm in den Wald, Marie!* And that is typical of this school. *The Song of*

*the Stonebreaker (Lied des Steinklopfers)* will be found in H. Benzmann: *Moderne deutsche Lyrik*. (New ed.) P. 273. Reclam-Bibliothek.

P. 25. Ludwig Jakobowski: *Leuchtende Tage. Neue Gedichte*. (3rd ed.) Egon Fleischel, Berlin, 1908. "That happens when," etc. P. 190.

P. 25. "That recall Henley . . . and Symons," etc. *Vide*, e.g., *Liese* (p. 199) and *Im Nachtcafé* (pp. 190-191). The poem I compare to the work of Mr. Masefield is *Der Soldat. Szenen aus der Grossstadt*. Pp. 204-227.

P. 25. Detlev von Liliencron: *Sämtliche Werke*. (15 vols.) Schuster und Loeffler, Berlin, n. d.

Pp. 25-26. "A naturalistic type of poetry," etc. *Ibid.* Vol. 8, p. 127.

"Ein echter Dichter, der erkoren  
ist immer als Naturalist geboren."

P. 26. "Lamprecht has pointed out," etc. *Vide Loc. cit.* P. 212.

P. 27. "The immediate translation of impression into art." I may give two very brief and simple instances found on pp. 10 and 51 respectively of the *Werke*, vol. 7.

"Morgen. Gräbergraber. Gräfte.  
Manch ein letzter Atemzug.  
Weither, witternd, durch die Lüfte  
braust und graust ein Geierflug."

"Unter den Linden, vorbei ist der Spass,  
trink ich bei Hiller ein stilles Glass,

ein stilles Glass auf ein fernes Grab,  
dann wieder ins Leben, bergauf, bergab."

Nor must I leave the English reader without at least a glimpse of Liliencron's method.

### AFTER THE HUNT

Tired and thirsty, weary of the way,  
I seek the forest-inn that is my own;  
Rifle and cap upon a bench I lay,  
Beside the water-pail my dog lies prone.  
The inn's young mistress, in the dying day  
Stands still as one from whom all joy has flown;  
Then she smiles shyly and half turns away—  
The guests' departure leaves us soon alone.

### WHO KNOWS WHERE

*(Battle of Kolin, June 18, 1757)*

On blood, smoke, ruin and the dead,  
On trampled grass unharvested  
The sun poured light.  
Dark fell. The battle's rage was o'er,  
And many a one came home no more  
From Kolin's fight.

A lad, half-boy, had shared the fray,  
Had first heard bullets whiz that day.  
He had to go . . .  
And though he swung his flag on high,  
Fate touched him, it was his to die,  
He had to go . . .

Near him there lay a pious book  
Which still the youngster bore and took  
With sword and cup.  
A grenadier from Bevern found  
The small, stained volume on the ground  
And picked it up.

And swiftly to the father brought  
This last farewell with silence fraught  
And with despair.  
Then wrote therein the trembling hand:  
"Kolin: my son hid in the sand.  
Who knows where!"

And he who here has sung this song  
And he who reads it, both are strong  
Of life and fair.  
But once art thou and once am I  
Hid in the sand eternally,  
Who knows where!

P. 29. Gustav Falke: *Mynheer der Tod*. (2nd ed.)  
Hamburg, A. Janssen, 1900, and *Tanz und Andacht*  
(2nd ed.) Hamburg, A. Janssen, 1900.

P. 30. Carl Busse: *Gedichte*. (5th ed.) Stuttgart,  
Cotta, 1903.

P. 31. Otto Julius Bierbaum: *Irrgarten der Liebe*.  
Leipzig, Im Insel-Verlag, 1910.

P. 31. "An epicure of the beautiful," etc. *Irrgarten*.  
P. 7.

"Wer die Schönheit sich erfasst  
schenckt der Welt den Rest mit Lachen,

all die plumpen Siebensachen,  
hat die Götter selbst zur Last."

P. 31. "*Oft in the silent night*" (*Oft in der stillen Nacht*). *Ibid.* P. 158. *The Black Lute* (*Die schwarze Laute*). *Ibid.* P. 178.

## IV

Max Halbe's *Youth* and Hirschfeld's *The Mothers* are now accessible in English in the Drama League Series of Plays, Doubleday, Page and Co., 1916. So are practically all of Hauptmann's plays in *The Dramatic Works of Gerhart Hauptmann*. (7 vols.) B. W. Huebsch, 1912-16. All these are edited by the present writer. For English translations of Schnitzler's plays I may refer to the bibliography in my *The Modern Drama*. B. W. Huebsch, 1915. The standard edition of Schnitzler in the original is: *Gesammelte Werke von Arthur Schnitzler*. Die Theaterstücke in vier Bänden. Berlin, S. Fischer, 1913.

## V

P. 43. Clara Viebig: *Das tägliche Brot*. Berlin, Egon Fleischel, 1907.

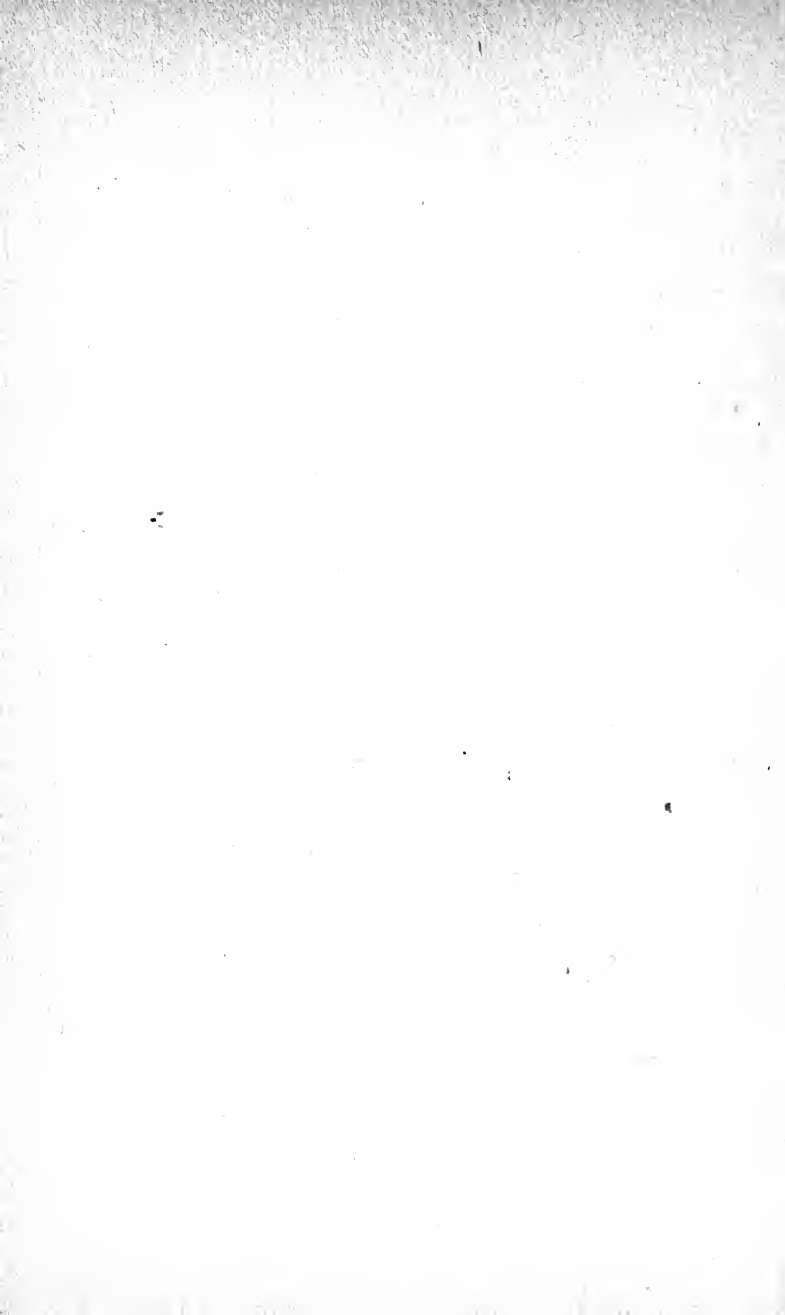
P. 43. Clara Viebig: *Die Wacht am Rhein*. Berlin, Egon Fleischel, 1907.

P. 47. Gustav Frenssen: *Jörn Uhl*. (202nd thousand.) Berlin, G. Grote, 1906.

P. 48. Thomas Mann: *Buddenbrooks*. (38 ed.) Berlin, S. Fischer, 1908.



P. 52. The prose writings of Schnitzler. *Gesammelte Werke von Arthur Schnitzler*. Die erzählenden Schriften in drei Bänden. Berlin, S. Fischer, 1913.



## COMMENTARY

### CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PUBLICATIONS ILLUSTRATIVE OF PART I

1884.

Detlev von Liliencron: Adjutantenritte.

1887.

Hermann Sudermann: Frau Sorge.

1889.

Holz and Schlaf: Die Familie Selicke. Gerhart Hauptmann: Vor Sonnenaufgang.

1892.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Die Weber. Otto Erich Hartleben: Geschichte vom abgerissenen Knopf.

1893.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Der Biberpelz. O. E. Hartleben: Hanna Jagert. Arthur Schnitzler: Anatol.

1895.

Wilhelm von Polenz: Der Büttnerbauer. Arthur Schnitzler: Sterben.

1896.

Arthur Schnitzler: Liebelei. Detlev von Liliencron: Ausgewählte Gedichte.

1897.

Georg von Ompteda: Sylvester von Geyer. Clara Viebig: Kinder der Eifel.

1898.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Fuhrmann Henschel. Max Halbe: Mutter Erde.

1900.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Michael Kramer.

1901.

Thomas Mann: Buddenbrooks. Gustav Frenssen: Jörn Uhl. Arthur Schnitzler: Frau Berta Garlan. Leutnant Gustl.

1902.

Clara Viebig: Das tägliche Brod.

1903.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Rose Bernd. Wilhelm Hegeler: Pastor Klinghammer.

1904.

Clara Viebig: Das schlafende Heer. Arthur Schnitzler: Der einsame Weg.

1905.

Gustav Frenssen: Hilligenlei.

1907.

Karl Schönherr: Erde.

1908.

Arthur Schnitzler: Der Weg ins Freie. George Hermann: Henriette Jacoby.

1910.

Karl Schönherr: Glaube und Heimat.

1911.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Die Ratten. Arthur Schnitzler: Das weite Land.

1912.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Gabriel Schillings Flucht.

## PART II

## I

P. 61. *Thus Spake Zarathustra*. It is unnecessary to give chapter and verse for each quotation. I have translated these directly from the small separate 8vo edition (65th to 68th thousand), published by C. G. Naumann, Leipzig, 1907. The edition contains Frau Förster-Nietzsche's important postscript: *Die Entstehung von "Also sprach Zarathustra."*

P. 62. "As Windelband puts it." *Vide* Wilhelm Windelband: *Die Philosophie im deutschen Geistesleben des XIX Jahrhunderts*. (2nd ed.) Tübingen, 1909. P. 116.

## II

P. 75. "I may quote Windelband once more." *Op. cit.* P. 119.

P. 76. Richard Dehmel. *Gesammelte Werke von Richard Dehmel*. In zehn Bänden. S. Fischer, Berlin, 1906 ff.

P. 76. "If art," etc. Vol. I, p. 5.

P. 77. "O man," etc. *Ibid.* Pp. 8-9. Of especial importance is the original wording of the second stanza:

"Rechne ab mit den Gewalten  
in dir, um dich. Sie ergeben  
zweierlei: wirst Du das Leben,  
wird das Leben dich gestalten?"

And in the same sense cf. *Ibid.* P. 123.

“Wem Zweckbesinnung fehlt  
den knechten seine Triebe.”

P. 79. Poems of social sympathy. *Ibid.* Vol. II. Pp. 159, 160, 170-171, 173.

P. 79. The Harp. *Ibid.* Vol. III. Pp. 74-75.

P. 79. “Expiated his yearning.” *Ibid.* Vol. III. P. 10. “Doch hab ich meine Sehnsucht stets gebüsst.”

P. 79. “Oh I have never,” etc. *Ibid.* Vol. III. Pp. 32-33. *Aus banger Brust.* Here is a version of this remarkable lyric.

The crimson roses burn and glow,  
Softly the dark leaves stir and shake,  
And I am in the grass awake,  
Oh, wert thou here,  
For soon the mid of night will break!

Into the lake the moonbeams flow,  
The garden gate hides her from view,  
The moveless willows stand arow,  
My burning forehead seeks the dew;  
Oh, I have never loved thee so!

Oh, I have never so deeply known  
As often as our close embrace  
Made each the other, why thy face  
Grew pallid and thy heart made moan  
When all my being sought thy grace.

And now—oh, hadst thou seen how there  
Two little fire-flies crept alow,

I nevermore from thee will fare,  
 Oh, wert thou here . . .  
 For still the crimson roses glow . . .

P. 79. "Every caricature," etc. *Ibid.* Vol. IV. P. 29.

"Jede Fratze  
 zeugt für den Gott den sie entstellt."

P. 81. *Two Souls.* *Ibid.* Vol. V.

P. 83. "The interpretation of modern life," etc. A few very brief indications of Dehmel's method will illustrate the point. *Vide* VI, 28.

"Und wenn's für mich nun eine Würde wäre  
 Strümpfe für meinen reichen Herrn zu stopfen?"

II, 26.

"Ich suchte einst ein bischen Sünde  
 und fand das ganze Himmelsreich."

Equally concrete and poetical is his dealing with nature in this poem. I, 21.

"Er hört im hohlen Holz die Spechte hammern."

I, 24.

"Wenn manchmal durch den schwerbeladnen Wald  
 das Eis der fernen Seen knallt."

II, 5.

"Ein dunkles Schloss wiegt zwischen seinen Giebeln  
 den grossen, goldnen Mond; zwei Fenster glühn.  
 Und drunten winden sich an Rebenhügeln  
 die Lichter kleiner Städte hin."

P. 84. "A single English illustration." The poem is *Drückende Luft* (*Oppressive Air*). But a better English title would be *Before the Storm*. *Ibid.* Vol. III. Pp. 32-33.

### III

P. 86. Rilke, George and Hofmannsthal. My quotations and references can all be verified by consulting the following volumes:

R. M. Rilke: *Die Frühen Gedichte*. Leipzig, Im Insel-Verlag, 1909.

R. M. Rilke: *Das Buch der Bilder*. (3rd ed.) Axel Junker, Berlin-Charlottenburg, n. d.

S. George: *Die Bücher der Hirten—Und Preisgedichte. Der Sagen und Sänge und der hängenden Gärten*. (3rd. ed.) Berlin, Georg Bondi, 1907.

S. George: *Das Jahr der Seele*. (4th ed.) Berlin, Georg Bondi, 1908.

H. von Hofmannsthal: *Die Gedichte und Kleinen Dramen*. Leipzig, Im Insel-Verlag, 1911.

H. von Hofmannsthal: *Kleine Dramen*. (2 vols.) Leipzig, Im Insel-Verlag, 1907.

P. 88. "I am so fearful," etc. Rilke: *Die Frühen Gedichte*. P. 91. And cf. *Ibid*, pp. 11 and 15.

"Ich fürchte mich so vor der Menschen Wort . . ."

"Ich bin zu Hause zwischen Tag und Traum . . ."

"Du must das Leben nicht verstehen,  
dann wird es werden wie ein Fest . . ."



P. 88. "Words escape us," etc. George: *Bücher der Hirten*. P. 70.

"Worte trügen, Worte fliehen,  
Nur das Lied ergreift die Seele . . ."

Pp. 89-90. "Give thy beauty freely," etc. Rilke: *Buch der Bilder*. P. 63.

"Gib deine Schönheit immer hin  
ohne rechnen und reden.  
Du schweigst. Sie sagt für dich: Ich bin,  
Und kommt in tausendfachem Sinn,  
kommt endlich über jeden."

P. 91. *Autumn Day*. Rilke: *Buch der Bilder*. P. 48.

"Herr: es ist Zeit. Der Sommer war sehr gross.  
Leg Deinen Schatten auf die Sonnenuhren  
und auf den Fluren lass die Winde los."

P. 91. "So klangen Knaben," etc. Rilke: *Buch der Bilder*. P. 117.

P. 92. "Und ich weiss jetzt," etc. Rilke: *Die Frühen Gedichte*. P. 18.

But the enchanting art of this poet should not blind us to the frequency with which he reflects both deeply and justly. *Vide*, e.g., *Der Schauende*, *Buch der Bilder*, pp. 153-154, with its memorable implication:

"Sein Wachstum ist: Der Tiefbesiegte  
von immer Grösserem zu sein."

P. 92. "Sie sind noch niemals," etc. Rilke: *Die Frühen Gedichte*. *Ars poetica*. P. 6.

P. 93. "Speaking alone and pure," etc. George: *Das Jahr der Seele*. P. 50.

"Und sprach allein und rein mit Stern und Wolke."

P. 93. "Austere and solitary realm." *Ibid.* P. 52.

"In einem seltnen Reiche ernst und einsam  
erfand er für die Dinge eigne Namen . . ."

P. 93. "The transitoriness," etc. The only quotation not from the volumes noted above. *Vide* H. Benzmann: *Moderne deutsche Lyrik*. Reclam-Bibliothek. (New edition.) P. 64.

"Nichts was mir je war raubt die Vergänglichkeit . . ."

P. 94. "—history or epochs," etc., and "Every age and every spirit," etc. *Vide* the brief prefatory note to *Die Bücher der Hirten*.

P. 94. "It would be hard to describe the result."—It is most perfectly seen in such poems as *Der Herr der Insel* (*Ibid.* Pp. 20–21), *Der Saitenspieler* (*Ibid.* P. 27), and *Der Tag des Hirten* (*Ibid.* Pp. 14–15) with its blending of Homeric clarity and modern grace:

"Ihm riefen singende Gelände zu . . .  
Er krönte betend sich mit heiligem Laub  
und in die lind bewegten lauen Schatten  
schon dunkler Wolken drang sein lautes Lied."

P. 94. "Freighted with amber grapes," etc. Arnold's *The Scholar Gypsy*.

P. 94. "What little town," etc. Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn*.

P. 95. *Death of Artimedora.* From Landor's *Pericles and Aspasia.* (LXXXV. Cleone to Aspasia.)

P. 95. "For this prototype has received," etc. *Vide* the brief prefatory note to *Das Jahr der Seele.*

P. 96. "Lyrics of Goethean charm." *Die Bücher der Hirten.* P. 70 and p. 105. These two stanzas will give their characteristic qualities.

"Und wenn meine Tränen fliessen!  
Was ich gestern nicht erriet  
heute bin ich es gewahr:  
Dass der letzte Trost mir flieht  
kann ich euch nicht mehr geniessen,  
neue Sonne, junges Jahr."

"Saget mir auf welchem Pfade  
heute sie vorüberschreite—  
dass ich aus der reichsten Lade  
zarte Seidenweben hole,  
Rose pflücke und Viole,  
dass ich meine Wange breite  
Schemel unter ihrer Sohle."

P. 96. . . . "stanzas . . . of a broad and rich . . . humanity." Here, again, a few lines, at least, must be quoted. *Vide Das Jahr der Seele.* Pp. 15, 22 and 122.

"Wir fühlen dankbar wie zu leisem Brausen  
von Wipfeln Strahlenspuen auf uns tropfen,  
und blicken nur und horchen wenn in Pausen  
die reifen Früchte an den Boden klopfen."

"Ich lasse meine grosse Traurigkeit  
dich falsch erraten um dich zu verschonen . . ."

“Und sieht! Die Tage die wie Wunden brannten  
in unsrer Vorgeschichte, schwinden schnell,  
doch alle Dinge die wir Blumen nannten  
versammeln sich am toten Quell.”

Pp. 96-97. “Here by these shores that we land on.”  
*Ibid.* P. 97. My rendering fails most obviously in the  
last of these noble stanzas:

“Nicht vor der eisigen Firnen  
drohendem Rätsel erschrick,  
und zu den ernsten Gestirnen  
hebe den suchenden Blick.”

P. 97. *Spring Presage. Vorfrühling.* H. von Hofmannsthal: *Gedichte* (*Ed. cit.*) P. 4.

P. 99. *The Poet and our Age.* H. von Hofmannsthal: *Die Prosaischen Schriften.* (*Ed. cit.*) Vol. I. P. 20.

#### IV

P. 102. “Is it not, in the last analysis,” etc. Ricarda Huch: *Erinnerungen von Ludolf Ursleu dem Jüngeren.* (10th ed.) Stuttgart, Cotta, 1908. P. 227.

P. 103. Hermann Hesse: *Peter Camenzind.* (4th ed.) Berlin, Egon Fleischel, 1908.

P. 103. Hermann Hesse: *Gertrud.* Berlin, S. Fischer, 1910.

P. 104. Helene Böhlau: *Der Rangierbahnhof.* (8th ed.) Berlin, Egon Fleischel, 1908.

P. 105. “The earth pours out,” etc. R. Huch: *Ludolf Ursleu* (*Ed. cit.*) P. 28.

- P. 105. "Her spirit throbs continually," etc. *Ibid.*  
P. 33.  
P. 106. "This is the nature of genius," etc. *Ibid.*  
P. 25.  
P. 106. "Consider that silent incident," etc. *Ibid.*  
Pp. 105-6.

## V

*Vide* the editions of Hauptmann and Schnitzler cited under Part I, Section IV.

## VI

- P. 114. "If thou wouldst fare," etc.  
"Willst du ins Unendliche schreiten,  
Geh nur im Endlichen nach allen Seiten."  
P. 114. "If thou wouldst rejoice," etc.  
"Willst du dich am Ganzen erquicken,  
So musst du das Ganze im Kleinsten erblicken."  
P. 114. "At bottom no realistic subject," etc. *Vide*  
Eckermann: *Gespräche mit Goethe*. July 5, 1827.  
P. 115. "When all things hum," etc. *Das Beste*.  
"Wenn dir's in Kopf und Herzen schwirrt,  
Was willst du Bessres haben!  
Wer nicht mehr liebt und nicht mehr irrt,  
Der lasse sich begraben."  
P. 116. "One thing is not fit," etc. *Beherrzigung*.

“Eines schickt sich nicht für alle!  
 Sehe jeder, wie er's treibe,  
 Sehe jeder, wo er bleibe,  
 Und wer steht dass er nicht falle.”

P. 116. “The world can be helped,” etc. Eckermann: *Gespräche mit Goethe*. Jan. 29, 1826.

P. 116. “Each must in reality,” etc. *Ibid.* April 20, 1825.

P. 116. “A liberator of his people.” *Sämtliche Werke*. Jubiläums-Ausgabe. Stuttgart, Cotta. Vol. 38. P. 325.

P. 117. “Even though thou err,” etc. Dehmel. (*Ed. cit.*) Vol. I. P. 112.

“Wenn du auch irrst  
 auf den Bergen des Strebens:  
 Nichts ist vergebens,  
 denn du wirst.  
 Nur: bleib Herr deines Strebens.”

P. 117. “And they who strive,” etc. Hauptmann: *Henry of Auë*. (*Ed. cit.*) Vol. IV. P. 339.

## COMMENTARY

### CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF PUBLICATIONS ILLUSTRATIVE OF PART II

1883-1891.

Friedrich Nietzsche: Also sprach Zarathustra.

1890.

Stefan George: Hymnen.

1891.

Richard Dehmel: Erlösungen.

1892.

Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Gestern. Der Tod des  
Tizian.

1893.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Hannele. Ludwig Fulda: Der  
Talisman. Richard Dehmel: Aber die Liebe. Ri-  
carda Huch: Ludolf Ursleu.

1895.

Stefan George: Die Bücher der Hirten.

1896.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Die versunkene Glocke. Helene  
Böhlau: Der Rangierbahnhof. Richard Dehmel:  
Weib und Welt.

1898.

Alfred Mombert: Die Schöpfung. Stefan George: Das  
Jahr der Seele.

1899.

Frank Wedekind: Der Kammersänger. Hugo von Hof-

mannsthal: Theater in Versen. Otto Julius Bierbaum: Gugeline. Blätter für die Kunst: Auswahl.

1900.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Schluck und Jau. Richard Dehmel: Lucifer.

1901.

Ricarda Huch: Aus der Triumphgasse.

1902.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Der arme Heinrich.

1903.

Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Elektra. Richard Dehmel: Zwei Menschen.

1904.

Richard Beer-Hofmann: Der Graf von Charolais.

1905.

Frank Wedekind: Die Büchse der Pandora. Hermann Hesse: Peter Camenzind.

1906.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Und Pippa tanzt. Enrica von Handel-Mazzetti: Jesse und Maria. Hermann Hesse: Unterm Rad. Rainer Maria Rilke: Das Stundenbuch.

1907.

Rainer Maria Rilke: Neue Gedichte. Ricarda Huch: Neue Gedichte.

1908.

Ernst Hardt: Tantris der Narr. Helene Böhlau: Das Haus zur Flamm.

1909.

Ludwig Thoma: Moral. Eduard von Keyserling: Bunte Herzen.



1910.

Gerhart Hauptmann: Der Narr in Christo.

1911.

Hugo von Hofmannsthal: Jedermann.

THE END



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By LUDWIG LEWISOHN

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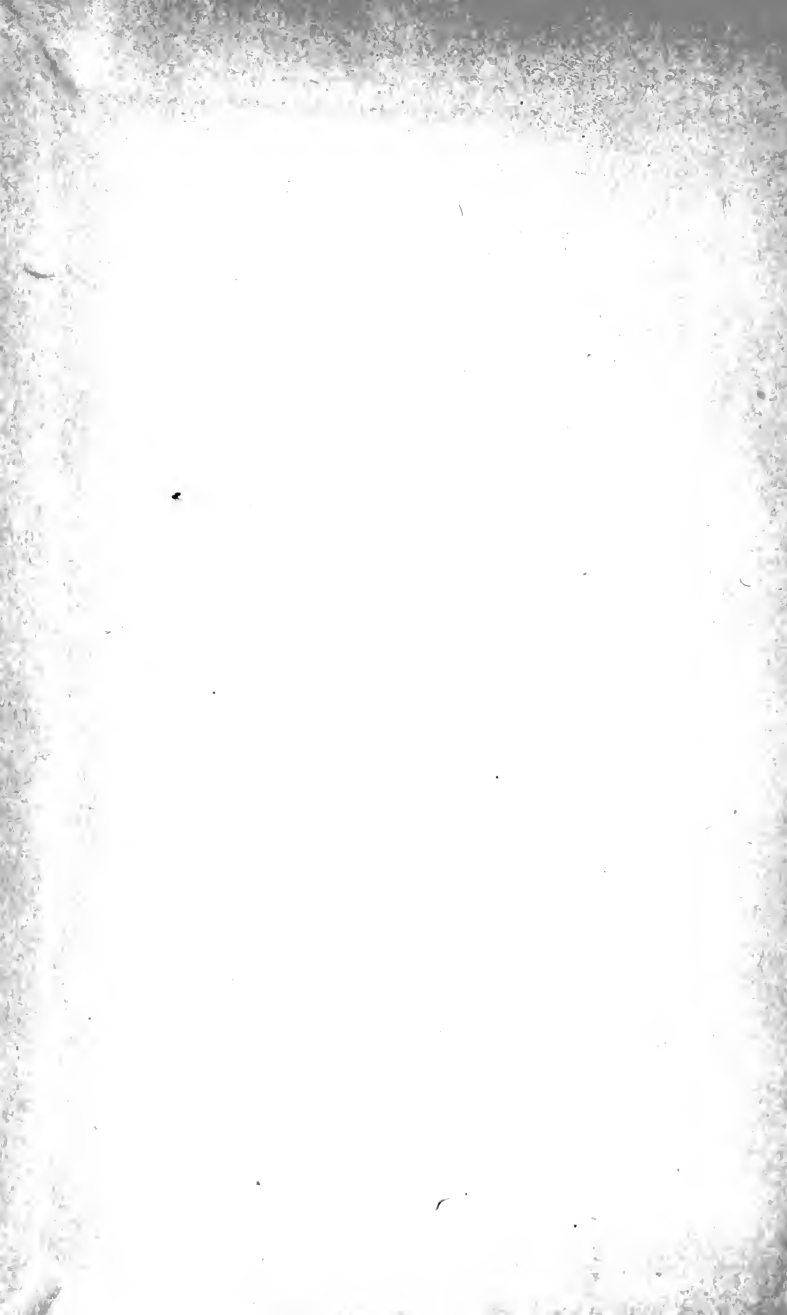
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